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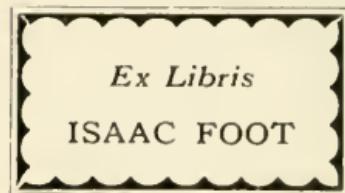
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Lazy

Minstrel

J. Ashby-Sterry

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THE LAZY MINSTREL





The Lazy Minstrel

By

J. ASHBY-STERRY
III

Author of "Cucumber Chronicles," "Boudoir Ballads,"
"Tiny Travels," "Shuttlecock Papers," "The
Snailway Guides," &c., &c., &c.

*And while his merry Banjo rang,
'Twas thus the Lazy Minstrel sang !*

FOURTH EDITION

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TO

NINA, MARY, AND FLORENCE,

THIS VOLUME IS

INSCRIBED.

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OVERTURE.

*Within this Volume you will find,
No project to "improve the mind" !
No "purpose" lurks within these lays—
These idle songs of idle days.
They're seldom learn'd, never long—
The best apology for song !
Should e'er they chance to have the pow'r,
To pass away some lazy hour—
They'll serve all "purpose," it is true,
The Minstrel ever had in view !*

LAZY LAYS.



HAMBLEDEN LOCK.

A CAPITAL luncheon I've had at the "Lion,"
I've drifted down here with the light Summer
breeze ;
I land at the bank, where the turf's brown and dry on,
And lazily list to the music of trees I
O, sweet is the air, with a perfume of clover,
O, sleepy the cattle in Remenham meads !
The lull of the lasher is soothing, moreover,
The wind whistles low in the stream-stricken reeds !
With sail closely furled, and a weed incandescent—
Made fast to a post is the swift *Shuttlecock*—
I think you will own 'tis uncommonly pleasant
To dream and do nothing by Hambleden Lock !

See a barge blunder through, overbearing and shabby,
With its captain asleep, and his wife in command ;
Then a boatful of beauties for Medmenham Abbey,
And a cargo of campers all tired and tanned.
Two duffers collide, they don't know what they're
doing—
They're both in the ways of the water unskilled—
But here is the Infant, so great at canoeing,
Sweet, saucy, short-skirted, and snowily frilled.
I notice the tint of a ribbon or feather,
The ripple of ruffle, the fashion of frock ;
I languidly laze in the sweet Summer weather,
And muse o'er the maidens by Hambleden Lock !

What value they give to the bright panorama—
O, had I the pencil of Millais or Sandys !—
The lasses with sunshades from far Yokohama,
The pretty girl-scullers with pretty brown hands !
Next the *Syren* steams in ; see the kind-eyed old colley,
On the deck, in the sun, how he loves to recline !
Note the well-ordered craft and its Skipper so jolly,
With friends, down to Marlow, he's taking to dine.
In the snug-curtained cabin, I can't help espying
A dew-clouded tankard of seltzer-and-hock,
And a plateful of peaches big babies are trying,
I note, as they glide out of Hambleden Lock !

A punt passes in, with Waltonians laden,
And boatman rugose of mahogany hue ;
And then comes a youth and a sunny-haired maiden
Who sit *vis-à-vis* in their bass-wood canoe.
Now look at the Admiral steering the *Fairy*,
O, where could he find a much better crew than
His dutiful daughters, Flo, Nina, and Mary,
Who row with such grace in his trim-built randan ?
I muse while the water is ebbing and flowing,
I silently smoke and serenely take stock
Of countless Thames toilers, now coming, now going,
Who take a pink ticket at Hambleden Lock !

SPRING'S DELIGHTS.

*'Tis good-bye to comfort, to ease and prosperity,
Now Spring has set in with its usual severity !*

SPRING'S Delights are now returning !
Let the Lazy Minstrel sing ;
While the ruddy logs are burning,
 Let his merry banjo ring !
Take no heed of pluvial patter,
 Waste no time in vain regrets ;
Though our teeth are all a-chatter,
 Like the clinking castanets !
Though it's freezing, sleetting, snowing,
 Though we're speechless from catarrh,
Though the East wind's wildly blowing,
 Let us warble, *Tra la la !*

Spring's Delights are now returning !
Let us order new great-coats :
Never let us dream of spurning
 Woollen wraps around our throats.

Let us see the couch nocturnal
Snugly swathed in eider-down :
Let not thoughts of weather vernal
Tempt us to go out of Town.
Though the biting blast is cruel,
Though our "tonic's" not *sol-fa*,
Though we sadly sup on gruel,
Let us warble, *Tra la la!*

Spring's Delights are now returning
Now the poet deftly weaves
Quaint conceits and rhymes concerning
Croton oil and mustard leaves !
Let us, though we are a fixture,
In our room compelled to stay—
Let us quaff the glad cough mixture,
Gaily gargle time away !
Though we're racked with pains rheumatic,
Though to sleep we've said ta-ta,
Let us, with a voice ecstatic,
Wildly warble, *Tra la la!*

Spring's Delights are now returning !
Doctors now are blithe and gay !
Heaps of money now they're earning,
Calls they're making ev'ry day.

Ev'ry shepherd swain grows colder,
As, in vain, he tries to sing ;
Feels he now quite ten years older,
'Neath the blast of blighting Spring !
Though we're doubtful of the issue,
Let us bravely shout Hurrah !
And in one superb *A-tishoo !*
Sneeze and warble *Tra la la !*

A MODERN SYREN.

THE laughing ripples sing their lay,
The sky is blue, and o'er the bay
The breeze is blowing free ;
For, O, the morning's fresh and fair,
And bright and bracing is the air,
Down by the summer sea.

A pretty, winsome, merry girl,
With all her sunny hair a-curl,
Was dimpled bonny Bee ;
Her laugh was light, her eyes were blue,
They always said her heart was true,
Down by the summer sea.

The sun is hot, the day is grand,
And up and down the yellow sand
Perambulateth he :
She promised they should meet at eight,
And from her lips should learn his fate,
Down by the summer sea.

He fancies it is getting late,
For by his watch 'tis now past eight,
 Some minutes twenty-three ;
The shore he scans with eyesight keen,
And notes the track of small *bottines*,
 Down by the summer sea.

He hums a merry song and strolls,
And tracks this pretty pair o' soles—
 His heart is full of glee !
For now that he has found the clue,
He follows footsteps two and two,
 Down by the summer sea.

“ But ah ! ” he says, and stops his song—
“ This soler system is all wrong,
 ‘Tis plain enough to me,
Those prints are proofs—I can’t tell whose—
But ‘ quite another pair of shoes,’
 Down by the summer sea.”

The short and narrow, long and wide,
He finds march closely side by side
 By some occult decree ;
And as he cons his footprints o’er,
He finds that two and two make four,
 Down by the summer sea !

He sighs, and says, "Ah, well, indeed!"
And from his pocket takes a weed,
 And strikes the light fuzee:
He adds, "I think I'll now go home,
For maidens' vows are frail as foam
 Down by the summer sea:"

REGRETS.

O FOR the look of those pure grey eyes—
Seeming to plead and speak—
The parted lips, the deep-drawn sighs,
The blush on the kissen cheek !

O for the tangle of soft brown hair,
Fanned by the lazy breeze ;
The fleeting hours unshadowed by care,
Shaded by tremulous trees !

O for the dream of those sunny days,
Their bright unbroken spell,
And thrilling sweet untutored praise—
From lips once loved too well !

O for the feeling of days agone,
The simple faith and truth,
The Spring of time, life's rosy dawn—
O for the love and the youth !

HAMMOCKUITY.

*If you swing in a hammock the summer day through,
And you dream with profound assiduity,
A new phase of content it will give unto you,
Which philosophers call "Hammockuity"?*

ALL through the lazy afternoon,
Beneath the sycamore,
I listen to the distant Lune,
Or slumber to its roar ;
'Tis sweet to muse, to sleep or sing,
When talk is superfluity ;
'Tis sweet beneath the trees to swing,
And practise hammockuity.

Forgotten here, I would forget
The destiny fate weaves,
The while I smoke a cigarette
To music of the leaves ;
I wish my present lazy life
A lengthy continuity ;
Away from trouble, care, and strife,
In happy hammockuity !

While others work, while others play,
Or love, or laugh, or weep ;
I watch the smoke-rings curl away,
And almost fall asleep !
I'd give up thought of future fame—
Despite such incongruity—
I'd forfeit riches, power, name,
For blissful hammockuity !

I hate the boooming busy bee
Who dares to wake me up—
I wonder if it's time for tea,
Or grateful cyder-cup ?
I would I could, beneath the trees,
Repose in perpetuity,
And swing, and sing, and take mine ease
In lasting hammockuity !

MY COUNTRY COUSIN.

TO Town, about the close of dull November,
Up comes the Country Cousin, pray remember,—
The Cattle Show to visit in December !

Her winsome, watchet eyes, they are the sweetest,
Her *chaussure* and her gloves they are the neatest,
Her toilette you'll consider the completest.

She's pretty, piquante, pouting, and capricious ;
So dainty, dimpled, daring, and delicious :
She's joyful, and she's jaunty and judicious.

She loves to hear the latest tittle-tattle ;
On manners, music, crinoline, and cattle,
And pictures, peers and poets will she prattle !

She often goes out shopping with her Mother,
The Park she sometimes visits with her Brother—
She'd much prefer to stroll there with Another !

The gay *Mikado* music sets her humming—
And how she likes the Temple kettle-drumming,
With those who love to go chrysanthemumming !

She has no views on “ rights ” or vivisection,
Finds politics a nuisance on reflection—
To bores she has a most supreme objection !

Delight she takes in anything that’s merry,
She dearly loves a pleasant lunch *chez* Verrey,
And much prefers dry Pommery to sherry !

She rattles through a picture exhibition,
Then goes to see a circus or magician,
And does a morning concert in addition !

Of theatres, you’ll find, she’ll ne’er grow weary ;
Each night she’ll go—let plays be good or dreary—
And sit them through, still looking bright and cheery !

She can’t e’en rest ’twixt Saturday and Monday,
But in a hansom—despite Mrs. Grundy—
She drives down to the Abbey on a Sunday !

She’s bright each morn—as fresh as any daisy—
And when with seeing sights I’m nearly crazy,
She says I am “ incorrigibly lazy ! ”

But when one morn from Euston she has started—
Those eyelids drooped a wee bit when we parted—
I certainly feel dismal and down-hearted.

That merry whirling time at last is ended!—
And as for hearts? Pooh! pooh! I'm feeling splendid.
“Least said,” the proverb hints, “is soonest mended.”

A COMMON-SENSE CAROL.

*By the sea, on the shore, it is pleasant to be,
The sunshine's delicious I own ;
This life would be ever delightful to me,
If folks would but leave me alone !*

O HOLIDAY-MAKERS can rarely be still,
, But take superhuman exertions
And make themselves hot and exhausted and ill
To organize horrid "excursions" !
Let those who enjoy it ride out in a "shay"—
Exploring each dell and each dingle—
But let me throw stones in the water all day
And roll on the sand and the shingle !

They think it delightful to walk on the pier,
And try to create a sensation ;
When passengers land, looking pallid and queer,
A cause is for great jubilation :
Let lunatics listen to bands when they play,
And nod to their noise and their jingle—
But let me throw stones in the water all day
And roll on the sand and the shingle !

Anemone-hunters roam over the rocks,
All hoping to fish up a tank-full ;
They hopelessly ruin their shoes and their socks—
O, why can't they rest and be thankful ?
They rave o'er a winkle, a wrass, or a wray,
And sea-weeds that with them commingle—
But let me throw stones in the water all day
And roll on the sand and the shingle !

They fancy 'tis pleasant to go for a sail
With wind in a dubious quarter ;
When waves "chop about," and they get very pale,
And up to their knees in the water.
Let maritime maniacs, wetted with spray,
Discourse on a cleat or a cringle—
But let me throw stones in the water all day
And roll on the sand and the shingle !

I'd much rather take a good pull at ozone
Without all this bustle and riot ;
If well-meaning friends would but leave me alone,
To bask in the sunshine and quiet.
Such labour as theirs fills my heart with dismay—
The thought of it makes my blood tingle—
So I will throw stones in the water all day
And roll on the sand and the shingle !

SAINT MAY.

*There's a bell that wakes the echo and renders incomplete,
The sullen shuttered silence of the solemn City street !*

S AINT ALOYS the Great is both mouldy and grim,
The Decalogue's dusty, the windows are dim ;
If I'm not mistaken, you'll long have to search
Before you discover this old City church :
But it's whereabouts I don't intend to betray,
Though a pilgrim each week to the shrine of Saint May !

The one bell is cracked in its crazy old tower,
The sermon oft lasts rather more than an hour ;
The parson is prosy, the clerk eighty-three,
The organ drones out in a sad minor key :
Yet how quickly the moments, I find, fly away,
I pass every week 'neath the spell of Saint May.

She sits in a high, ancient black oaken pew,
Which almost conceals her fair face from my view ;
The sweetest of pictures, it can't be denied,
With two tiny sisters who sit by her side :
And they lisp the responses and kneel down to pray,
With their little hands locked in the palm of Saint May.

Of saints I've seen many in churches before—
In Florence or Venice, they're there by the score ;
Agnese, Maria—the rest I forget—
By Titian, Bassano, and brave Tintoret—
Though as pictures delightful, I fancy that they,
E'en as pictures, can't rival my gentle Saint May.

She's almost too young and too plump for a saint,
With sweet little dimples that Millais might paint ;
She wears no ascetic or mortified mien,
No wimple of yellow or vestment of green—
But her soft golden hair throws a sunshiny ray,
Like a nimbus, around the fair face of Saint May !

What surquayne or partlet could look better than
My saint's curly jacket of black Astracan ?
What coif than her bonnet—a triumph of skill—
Or alb than her petticoat, edged with a frill.
Would she love, would she honour, and would she *obey* ?
I wonder while gazing across at Saint May !

The sermon is finished, the blessing is o'er,
The sparse congregation drift out at the door ;
I pause as I pass down the gloomy old aisle,
To see my saint pass and perchance get a smile :

I would daily change faith like the Vicar of Bray,
Could I pass all my life in adoring Saint May !

Through the weary dull week, as it rolls on apace,
I'm haunted by thoughts of that tender young face;
And oft, O how oft, does the vision arise—
The pureness and truth of those eloquent eyes !
And I long for the hour, and I count on the day,
When I sit at a distance and worship Saint May !

No doubt you'll be vastly surprised when you're told
Her name, in the Calendar, ne'er was enrolled—
They prattled of "May," the sweet sisterly pair,
I added the "Saint,"—she was canonized there !
Ah ! if saints might wed sinners, I'd yield to her sway,
And I straightway would fall on my knees to Saint May !

A CANOE CANZONET.

*The leaves scarce rustled in the trees,
And faintly blew the summer breeze ;
A damsel drifted slowly down,
Aboard her ship to Henley town ;
And as the white sail passed along,
A punted Poet sang this song !*

IN your canoe, love, when you are going,
With white sail flowing, and merry song ;
In your canoe, love, with ripples gleaming
And sunshine beaming, you drift along !
While you are dreaming, or idly singing,
Your sweet voice ringing, when skies are blue :
In summer days, love, on water-ways, love,
You like to laze, love,—in your canoe !

In your canoe, love, I'd be a tripper,
If you were skipper and I were mate ;
In your canoe, love, where sedges shiver
And willows quiver, we'd navigate !
Upon the River, you'd ne'er be lonely,
For, if you only had room for two,
I'd pass my leisure with greatest pleasure
With you, my treasure,—in your canoe !

In your canoe, love, when breezes sigh light,
 In tender twilight, we'd drift away ;
In your canoe, love, light as a feather,
 Were we together—what *should* I say ?
In sunny weather, were Fates propitious,
 A tale delicious I'd tell to you !
In quiet spots, love, forget-me-nots, love,
 We'd gather lots, love,—in your canoe !

BOLNEY BACKWATER, *July.*

A LOVER'S LULLABY

MIRROR your sweet eyes in mine, love,
See how they glitter and shine !
Quick fly such moments divine, love,
Link your lithe fingers in mine !

Lay your soft cheek against mine, love,
Pillow your head on my breast ;
While your brown locks I entwine, love,
Pout your red lips when they're prest !

Mirror your fate, then, in mine, love ;
Sorrow and sighing resign :
Life is too short to repine, love,
Link your fair future in mine !

THE TAM O' SIANTER CAP.

*Upon the Spa at Scarborough, the Minstrel was a panter—
He asked a Wilful Maiden why she wore a Tam o' Shanter?
She gazed upon his furrowed face, half doubting if he chaffed her,
Then, noting well his solemn mien, she answered thus, with
laughter—*

LET others wear, upon the Spa,
The "Rubens" hat or bonnet;
The "Gainsborough," the Tuscan straw,
With *marguerites* upon it—
The "Pamela," of quaint design,
The "Zulu," or the "Planter"—
But as for me, I much incline
To wear my Tam o' Shanter !

Let others sport the fluffy hat,
The "Sailor Boy," or "Granny;"
The "Bargee," or some other that
Is anything but canny.
If petticoats be short or long,
Or fuller be or scantier,
Or if you think it right or wrong—
I'll wear my Tam o' Shanter,

I'll wear it if it's hot or cold,
Let weather what it may be !
Will this Child do "what she is told" ?
Or is she *quite* a baby ?
I do not care for my Mama,
Or Cousin Charlie's banter ;
Despite the chaff of dear Papa,
I'll wear my Tam o' Shanter !

You ask me if I'll tell you why
I cannot do without it ?
Because it keeps me cool and dry—
You seem inclined to doubt it ?
The reason why ? There, pray don't tease !
I'll tell you that instanter.
The reason is—*Because I please*
To wear my Tam o' Shanter !

A STREET SKETCH.

UPON the Kerb, a maiden neat—
Her hazel eyes are passing sweet—
There stands and waits in dire distress :
The muddy road is pitiless,
And 'busses thunder down the street !

A snowy skirt, all frill and pleat ;
Two tiny, well-shod, dainty feet
Peep out, beneath her kilted dress,
Upon the Kerb !

She'll first advance and then retreat,
Half frightened by a hansom fleet.
She looks around, I must confess,
With marvellous coquettishness !—
Then droops her eyes and looks discreet,
Upon the Kerb !

A TINY TRIP.

THE BILL OF LADING.

She was cargo and crew,
She was boatswain and skipper,
She was passenger too,
Of the *Nutshell* canoe ;
And the eyes were so blue
Of this sweet tiny tripper !
She was cargo and crew,
She was boatswain and skipper !

THE PILOT.

How I bawled, “ Ship, ahoy ! ”
Hard by Medmenham Ferry !
And she answered with joy,
She would like a convoy,
And would love to employ
A bold pilot so merry :
How I bawled, “ Ship, ahoy ! ”
Hard by Medmenham Ferry !

THE VOYAGE.

'Neath the trees gold and red,
 In that bright autumn weather,
When our white sails were spread,
 O'er the waters we sped—
What was it she said ?
 When we drifted together !
'Neath the trees gold and red,
 In that bright autumn weather !

THE HAVEN.

Ah ! the moments flew fast,
 But our trip too soon ended !
When we reached land at last,
 And our craft was made fast,
It was six or half-past—
 And Mama looked offended !
Ah ! the moments flew fast,
 But our trip too soon ended !

A STUDY.

MADE IN "BRADSHAW" AT CARNFORTII JUNCTION.

MISS DIMPLECHEEK,
Your winsome face,
Your figure full of girlish grace,
Is quite unique !
Your pretty, poutful, childlike charm,
All criticism must disarm,
Miss Dimplecheek !

Miss Dimplecheek,
Ah ! well-a-day,
I watch your pretty roses play
At hide and seek !
While York to Lancaster gives place,
And sweeter grows your pretty face—
Miss Dimplecheek !

Miss Dimplecheek,
I wonder if
You ever revel in a tiff,
Or pout in pique
Or droop those pretty eyelids down,
Or shake your shoulders, stamp, or frown,
Miss Dimplecheek ?

Miss Dimplecheek,
I gaze, and then—
The most cantankerous of men
Grows mild and meek.
Your faults? Perchance you *may* have some—
But to your faults I'm blind and dumb—
Miss Dimplecheek.

Miss Dimplecheek,
If I but knew
Who was the proud papa of you
I'd quickly speak :
And get an introduction, so
Eventually I might know
Miss Dimplecheek.

Miss Dimplecheek,
I leave you here,
For I am off to Windermere,
To stay a week :
I p'r'aps may ne'er see you again—
But—there's the bell, and here's my train—
Miss Dimplecheek!

A FIRE-LIGHT SONATA.

*When the wind moans without and the day dies away,
And there's snow in the air and the sky's leaden grey,
When the town becomes dull and the country is drear,
And one feels somewhat sad at the end of the year,
What better fate then, could the Rhymer desire
Than to sit an' do nothing and gaze at the fire?*

I MOON in the mystical shy light—
While shadows come fast as they go—
And watch mid the fire and the twilight ;
How gloom gives a glory to glow !
My room grows delightfully mellow,
For golden and bright is the blaze,
The ceiling is chequered and yellow,
While gas-jets sing eloquent lays :
When thoughts somewhat aimlessly wander,
When husht is the laziest lyre—
I sit, like a Gheber, and ponder
And worship the Fire !

How grand is the golden pavilion !
How quaint are the coralline caves !
The mountains aglow with vermillion—
How grim are the cindery graves !
How weird are the lights opalescent !—
Like beacons that seem to proclaim
Invasions of towns incandescent,
And forests all florid with flame :
That brave salamanderic army ;
Its glitter I'm bound to admire,
While fairies of flame ever charm me—
That lurk in the Fire !

Ah ! Time with its troubles slow-flying,
Ah ! Time with its pleasures soon fled !
The Year with its sorrows now dying—
The Year with its joys nearly dead !
A season for solemn reflection—
For homilies garnered in sheaves :
For growling, regret and dejection,
And talk of o'er turning new leaves !
But ruddy light glitters and glances—
My Muse it is bound to inspire—
As worlds of the wildest romances,
I read in the Fire !

Comes back, as I'm lazily dreaming,
A dream of the long, long ago !
I hear, as the red coals are gleaming,
The music of words whispered low :
Those promises made—quickly broken—
They never were likely to last—
Ah ! sweet words so lovingly spoken,
Come mingled with songs of the past !
Through realms, half-forgotten, I'm roaming—
“ Ah ! flames only flash to expire,”
I think, as I sit in the gloaming—
And gaze in the Fire !

A SECRET.

*The Sculler was lazy, the Pilot was merry,
That morning they drifted by Bablock Hythe Ferry !
He leant on his sculls and he gazed in her eyes,
But what he read there, I don't dare to surmise :
Mid the sigh of the sedges, the song of the trees,
This question came borne on the light summer breeze,*

V VI ! Away from friends suspicious,
Shyly sweet, and sweetly shy—
Do not think me injudicious,
Vi !

Tell me, darling, tell me why,
Whisper by chance adventitious,
Tell me why you softly sigh ?

Drooping watchet eyes delicious,
P'r'aps you'll tell me bye and bye ?
Curly, coyful, and capricious,
Vi !

*It can't be expected that I should reveal,
The private affairs of the Girl at the Wheel—
But young men and maidens, I clearly foresee,
Will wonder what Violet's answer could be !*

BABLOCK HYTHE FERRY, June.

LIZZIE.**PAINTED BY LESLIE.**

O, WHO can paint the picture of my pet ?
As 'mid the grey-green hay she childlike
kneels,
Who shows a dainty slipper, then conceals
'Neath tangled grass its celadon rosette.
A soft white robe, a broidered chemisette
Scarce veils her rounded bosom, as it steals
A subtle charm it only half reveals—
As sweet and modest as the violet !

A gipsy hat casts shadows, pearly grey,
Across the golden sunshine of her smile.
Her glance e'en cynics dare not disobey,
Her dimples even iron hearts beguile—
A dainty despot on a throne of hay,
Who conquers all by magic girlish wile !

A MARLOW MADRIGAL.

O, BISHAM BANKS are fresh and fair,
And Quarry Woods are green,
And pure and sparkling is the air,
Enchanting is the scene !
I love the music of the weir,
As swift the stream runs down,
For, O, the water's deep and clear
That flows by Marlow town !

When London's getting hot and dry,
And half the Season's done,
To Marlow you should quickly fly,
And bask there in the sun.
There pleasant quarters you may find—
The “Angler” or the “Crown”
Will suit you well, if you're inclined
To stay in Marlow town.

I paddle up to Harleyford,
And sometimes I incline
To cushions take with lunch aboard,
And play with rod and line.
For in a punt I love to laze,
And let my face get brown ;
And dream away the sunny days
By dear old Marlow town I

I go to luncheon at the Lawn,
I muse, I sketch, I rhyme ;
I headers take at early dawn,
I list to All Saints' chime.
And in the River, flashing bright,
Dull Care I strive to drown—
And get a famous appetite
At pleasant Marlow town I

So when, no longer, London life
You feel you can endure ;
Just quit its noise, its whirl, its strife,
And try the “ Marlow-cure ” !
You’ll smooth the wrinkles on your brow
And scare away each frown—
Feel young again once more, I vow,
At quaint old Marlow town !

Here Shelley dreamed and thought and wrote,
And wandered o'er the leas ;
And sung and drifted in his boat
Beneath the Bisham trees.
So let *me* sing, although I'm no
Great poet of renown—
Of hours that much too quickly go,
At good old Marlow town !

IN ROTTEN ROW.

A WAY with all sorrow, away with all gloom,
Now may is in blossom, and lilac in bloom ;
The golden laburnum in gardens is gay,
The windows are bright with their floral display ;
The air is delightful, and warm is the sun,
The chesnuts are snowy, the Derby is won.
Piccadilly is pleasant from daylight to dark,
And Bond Street is crowded, and gay is the Park—
So now is the time when you all ought to go,
And sit on a Chair 'neath the trees in the Row !

For only a penny I sit in the shade,
And gaze with delight on the gay cavalcade !
While countless romances I read if I please,
In the people I see from my Chair 'neath the trees.
'Tis better by far than an Opera-stall,
A crowded At-home or a smart fancy ball ;
Or gazing at pictures, or playing at pool,
Or playing the banjo, or playing the fool—
When soft summer breezes from Kensington blow,
'Tis pleasant to sit on a Chair in the Row !

What studies of man and of woman and horse
Here pass up and down on the tan-trodden course !
The Earl and the Duke and the Doctor are there,
The author, the actor, the great millionaire ;
The first-season beauties whose roses are red,
The third-season beauties whose roses have fled !
M.P.'s, upon cobs, chatting pleasantly there,
And pets, upon ponies, with long sunny hair—
I note them all down, as they pass to and fro,
And muse in my Chair 'neath the trees in the Row !

What countless fair pictures around may be seen,
How colours flash bright on their background of green !
A bouquet of figure, of fashion, of face,
And dainty devices in linen and lace !
The triumphs of Worth and of Madame Elise
You see as you wonder and moon 'neath the trees.
What sweet scraps of scandal afloat in the air,
And gossip you hear sitting silently there !—
But folks are going lunchwards ; I'll join them, and so
I ponder no more in my Chair in the Row !

A PORTRAIT.

IN sunny girlhood's vernal life
She caused no small sensation ;
But now the modest English wife
To others leaves flirtation.
She's young still, lovely, debonair,
Although sometimes her features
Are clouded by a thought of care
For those two tiny creatures.

Each tiny, toddling, mottled mite
Asserts with voice emphatic,
In lisping accents, "Mite is right"—
Their rule is autocratic :
The song becomes, that charmed mankind,
Their musical narcotic,
And baby lips, than Love, she'll find,
Are even more despotic !

Soft lullaby, when singing there,
And castles ever building—
Their destiny she'll carve in air,
Bright with maternal gilding :
Young Guy, a clever advocate—
So eloquent and able !
A powdered wig upon his pate,
A coronet for Mabel !

SYMPHONIES IN FUR.

COMPOSED DURING THE FROST.

*In these rough rhymes I string together
Portraits of each pretty face—
Which, in this rough and rimey weather,
Surely can't be out of place.*

LADY SEALSKIN.

A DAINTY young damsel is Pearl,
Beclad in the softest of sealskin :
I'm told her papa is an Earl ;—
Just watch her most gracefully twirl,
A lovely and lissom young girl,
Whose jersey is tight as an eelskin ;
A dainty young damsel is Pearl,
Beclad in the softest of sealskin.

MISS OTTER.

You never, I'm certain, saw such
A lithe little learner in otter !
She's ready to fall at a touch ;
Behold how she's anxious to clutch

Her ebony-stick with a crutch.
By which she's enabled to totter.
You never, I'm certain, saw such
A lithe little learner in otter.

PRINCESS ERMINE.

Pray, who is the pretty Princess,
Who is robed in the royal-est ermine?
And exquisite velveteen dress,
With bangles that ring more or less;
I'm sure you're unable to guess,
And 'tis hardly for me to determine!
Pray, who is this pretty Princess,
Who is robed in the royal-est ermine?

MISS SILVER-GREY RABBIT.

Here comes that big baby called Bee,
Who is clad in the coat of a bunny!
A romping young rebel is she—
Her skirts only reach to her knee,
Her life's full of mischief and glee,
And a "spill" she thinks screamingly funny.
Here comes that big baby called Bee,
Who is clad in the coat of a bunny!

THE HON. MABEL SABLE.

O, had I ten thousand a year
I'd marry Miss Mabel in sable !
A dainty, divine little dear,
She's out of my reach though she's near—
I'd woo her to-day without fear,
And wed her at once, were I able !
O, had I ten thousand a year
I'd marry Miss Mabel in sable !

MISS BEARSKIN.

And this is our sweet little Flo,
A bonny young beauty in bearskin !
How glibly she'll glide to and fro,
And sweet sunny glances bestow,
While a lovely carnational glow
Just flushes her exquisite fair skin.
And this is our sweet little Flo,
A bonny young beauty in bearskin !

DRIFTING DOWN.

DRIFTING down in the grey-green twilight,

O, the scent of the new-mown hay !

The oars drip in the mystic shy light,

O, the charm of the dying day !

While fading flecks of bright opalescence

But faintly dapple a saffron sky,

The stream flows on with superb quiescence,

The breeze is hushed to the softest sigh.

Drifting down in the sweet still weather,

O, the fragrance of fair July !

Love, my Love, when we drift together,

O, how fleetly the moments fly !

Drifting down on the dear old River,

O, the music that interweaves !

The ripples run and the sedges shiver,

O, the song of the lazy leaves !

And far-off sounds—for the night so clear is—

Awake the echoes of bygone times ;

The muffled roar of the distant weir is

Cheered by the clang of the Marlow chimes.

Drifting down in the cloudless weather,

O, how short is the summer day !

Love, my Love, when we drift together,

O, how quickly we drift away !

Drifting down as the night advances,

O, the calm of the starlit skies !

Eyelids droop o'er the half-shy glances,

O, the light in those blue-grey eyes !

A winsome maiden is sweetly singing

A dreamy song in a minor key ;

Her clear low voice and its tones are bringing

A mingled melody back to me.

Drifting down in the clear calm weather,

O, how sweet is the maiden's song !

Love, my Love, when we drift together,

O, how quickly we drift along !

TOUJOURS TENNIS.

BY A WILFUL LAWNTEENNISONIENNE.

O BRING me, O bring me, my stout mackintosh,
I care not a feather for slime or for slosh !
The sky it is leaden, the lawn sopping wet,
And sodden the balls are, and slack is the net !
I've done it before and I'll do it again,
I'll play at Lawn-Tennis in spite of the rain !

I'll don my sou'-wester, then what do I care
If weather be foul or if weather be fair ?
I'll put on my furs, and I'll shorten my clothes,
I'll wear my galoshes and thick woollen hose :
I care not a pin for the storm or the flood,
I'll play at Lawn-Tennis in spite of the mud !

I laugh as the hailstones come patterning down,
I'm spattered all over from sole unto crown !
In thunder and lightning I'll play all the same—
I *won't* be debarred from my favourite game !
Though weak-hearted lasses may quiver and quail,
I'll play at Lawn-Tennis in spite of the hail !

In summer 'tis pleasant, but you ought to know
'Tis capital fun in the winter also :
When nets are all frozen and balls can't rebound,
When chilly the air is and snow's on the ground !
Though lazy folks shiver, and say 'tis "no go,"
I'll play at Lawn-Tennis in spite of the snow !

What pleasure can equal, what exercise vies
This winter Lawn-Tennis, with snow in your eyes ?
You trip and you tumble, you glance and you glide,
You totter and stumble, you slip and you slide !
With two ancient racquets strapped fast to my feet,
I'll play at Lawn-Tennis in spite of the sleet !

In autumn, as well as in summer or spring,
In praise of Lawn-Tennis I heartily sing !
Though good at each season, and better each time,
I'm certain in winter the game's in its prime !
You doubt it ? No matter ! Whate'er may befall,
I'll play at Lawn-Tennis in spite of you all !

TARPAULINE.

A SKETCH AT RYDE.

A PRETTY picture is it not,
Beneath the awning of the yacht ?
A beauty of Sixteen,
She wears a trim tarpaulin hat,
So now you know the reason that
I call her Tarpauline.

A taut serge dress of Navy blue,
A boatswain's silver whistle, too,
She wears when she's afloat ;
An open collar, and I wot,
A veritable sailor's knot
Around her pretty throat.

She has a glance that pleads and kills ;
And 'mid her shy and snowy frills
A little foot appears ;
She has the softest sunny locks,
The compass she knows how to box,
And, when it's needful—cars !

The smartest little sailor-girl,
Who'll steer or "bear a hand" or furl,
 And I am told she oft
Quite longs to reef her petticoats,
And gleefully to "girl the boats,"
 Or glibly go aloft !

But now how lazily she lies !
And droops those tender trustful eyes
 Unutterably sweet !
While snugly 'neath the bulwark curled,
Forgetting all about the world,
 The *World* is at her feet !

With tiny, dimpled, sunburnt hand,
She pats the solemn Newfoundland
 Who crouches at her side.
She's thinking—not of me nor you,
When smiling as she listens to
 The lapping of the tide.

O, were I pressed, aboard that ship,
How joyfully I'd take a trip,
 For change of air and scene !
I'd soon pack up a carpet-bag,
And gladly sail beneath the flag,
 Of bonny Tarpauline !

THE KITTEN.

A SWEET, short-skirted, pouting pet,
A winsome, laughing, glad, girlette ;
She's ten-and-thoughtless, and as yet,
 By falsity unsmitten !
A merry young misogynist,
Few boyish games can she resist—
 The Kitten !

She hates a doll and girlish toys,
She's fond of whips, and dogs, and boys,
For, truth to tell, she finds no joys
 In crewel-work or tatting :
But see how smiling is her face,
Indeed, a pretty gleeful Grace—
 When batting !

She bowls with marvellous success,
And keeps her wicket, I confess—
Despite her graceful girlish dress—
 As well as any Briton !
She's saucy, silly, and self-willed,
The smartest longstop ever frilled—
 The Kitten ?

She's erudite in "wides" and "byes,"

And I will venture to surmise,

She'll vanquish any boy her size

At games of single-wicket !

And yet, no doubt, she's good as gold,

For I'll go bail she's only bold—

At cricket !

But like her namesake, clad in fur,

No mischief comes amiss to her ;

To me it seems it should occur,

To leave her faults unwritten.

She'll make a score, I'm sure of that,

And loves to carry out her bat—

The Kitten !

TUNBRIDGE WELLS, *August.*

IN THE TEMPLE.

*The danger that lurks in Chrysanthemum Shows,
You'll see in this letter from Milly to Rose !*

DEAR ROSE,

I never shall forget—

That is, I always shall remember—

The very brightest day, my pet,

We had throughout this dull November !

I went last Monday, you must know,

With Tina, Mrs. S., and Clarry,

To see the Temple flower-show,

And, best of all, to lunch with Harry !

We saw the gardens—'twould be sport

To make the Benchers play lawn-tennis—

And chambers in a dingy court

Where Fanny Bolton nursed Pendennis :

The rooms where Goldsmith lived and died,

The sycamore where Johnson prated ;

The house where Pip did once reside,

The Fountain where sweet Ruth Pinch waited.

We grasped a massive balustrade—
The date, they said, was Sixteen Thirty—
The way was dark, and I'm afraid
We found the staircase rather dirty.
Those grim old stairs to Harry's Den—
We climb them gaily, nothing daunted—
They still by Warrington and Pen,
And other pleasant ghosts are haunted !

Ah, what a spot, my dearest Rose,
To muse upon this queer old Den is !
To catalogue its curios
I'm sure unable quite my pen is !
But from its panes we gaze upon
The misty midday sun a-quiver ;
The red-sailed barges drifting on,
The sparkle of the dear old River !

Then mingling sweetly one perceives—
'Mid laughter light and girlish gabble—
The sighing of the autumn leaves,
And singing of the Fountain's babble !
How quick my thoughts drift back again
To those bright happy days at Hurley—
A pleasure strongly dashed with pain—
(O, Harry's locks are brown and curly !)

But, Rose, the luncheon ! It was grand—
The oak you know, my love, was sported—
And all the speeches, understand,
Were much too good to be reported.
There's Clarry and big Charlie Clough—
It is a case ! I think they'll marry—
I wonder who is good enough
For handsome, grey-eyed, laughing Harry ?

It soon grew dark, but I could see
That clearly no one did desire light ;
For Tina and young Freddy B.
Were spooning by the fitful firelight.
We stayed till late, for Mrs. S.
The most enduring chaperone is.
And Harry sang ! I must confess
His voice the richest baritone is.

Ah, how the moments quickly flit
In song and talk and playful banter !
The motto on the sundial writ
Is *Pereunt et imputantur.*
I'm rather sad ! Ah, what's the use ?
I know you'll think I'm very silly ;
Although I am a little goose,
I always am, your loving Milly.

AN UNFINISHED SKETCH.

A SYMPHONY IN WHITE.

*Too fair for prose, too sweet for rhyme,
A laughing lass beneath the lime!*

ONE sunny day in glorious July
I lazed upon the verdant tennis lawn !
And smoking there an idle cigarette
I watched a maid who gazed upon the game,
Clad in a simple snowy cambric frock,
And all the budding beauty of Sixteen !
And as she held her racquet banjo-wise,
While dreamily she trifled with its strings,
I sketched the merry maiden as she stood,
And sang a lazy lay beneath the lime.

An impudent down-tilted sailor hat—
Begirt with sheeny ribbon lily white—
That throws in shade a pair of pure grey eyes—
Dark-lashed, delightful, luminous, and sweet—

But lets the sunshine kiss her ripe red lips,
And mocking the carnation of her check,
It plays about her pretty rounded chin,
And glints amid her straying sunny curls.

A white, white dress that artlessly reveals—
So exquisite its fashion and its fit—
The pouting beauty of her fair young form ;
In all its dainty, dimpled girliness !
From 'neath a silken girdle at her waist
The countless gathers radiate and fall,
And give a hint of undulating grace,
That closely clinging cambric strives to mock.
Such is her choice costume so fresh and crisp ;
So recently assumed, it scarce has gain'd
The pretty pucker and the nameless charm,
It borrows from the wearer's changeful curves ;
While warm white lights start forth in bold relief,
Contrasting with the shadows pearly grey,
About her slender figure, pliant pleats
Now slyly smile and play at hide-and-seek :
And, in transparent shadow, come and go,
Shy hints of lace and subtle *broderie* !

Observe—the filmy ruff about her throat,
The pretty ruffles at her slender wrists,

The shapely beauty of her small brown hands,
That harp upon the rigid racquet strings.
Note well the smart coquettish tennis shoon,
The shimmer of her silken, sable hose,
The while her tiny feet beat faultless time,
And flash and glitter 'neath her petticoat !

And then——Ah, me ! a cloud is o'er the sun,
The breeze is cold, and life has lost its charm ;
The song has ceased—the maid has gone and left
The Sketcher unfinished, and the Sketcher sad !

ON BOARD THE "GLADYS."

LOUNGING at ease in the laziest attitude,
Fresh briny breezes are blowing so free ;
Never once thinking of longi—or lati—tude,
Whilst our swift schooner skims over the sea.

Smart little sailor-girls, laughing deliciously,
Soften the skipper with maidenly wiles ;
Climb where they oughtn't to, pouting capriciously,
Vanquish the boatswain with sunniest smiles.

If a squall blows—as it will most unluckily—
Dear little damsels, the best of A. B.'s,
Face the salt spray, reef their petticoats pluckily,
Laugh at wet jackets and sing in the breeze !

Note them, ye maidens so silly and finical,
See the brown hands of each nautical dear ;
Hear them discourse on a bobstay or binnacle,
Watch their delight when permitted to steer !

Dinners on deck are divinely delectable—
Under the awning, well screened from the sun—
Some folks would dine *à la Russe* and respectable ;
Give *us* the laughing, the quaffing, and fun !

Dreaming when heats of the noontide so hazily
Shimmer around our becalmed little craft ;
Smoking and mooning, so languidly lazily,
Whilst some one reads 'neath the awning abaft.

Dreaming in soft summer night so mysterious,
Watching the waves as they dash from the bows ;
Prattle becoming first sober, then serious,
Laughter soon softened to tremulous vows.

Drifting from chaff into "something particular,"
Though you intended but simply to "spoon :"
Starlight is good for confession auricular,
Lunatics thrive in the light of the moon !

Down in the cabin at night, you most willingly
Cluster to hear, round the small pianette,
Sweet voices warble low, tender and thrillingly,
Siren-like songs that you fain would forget.

Far from the boredom of vapid society,
Leaving all care and all worry at home,
Swift speed the days in an endless variety,
While the trim *Gladys* flies over the foam !

CIGARETTE RINGS.

HOW it blows! How it rains! I'll not turn out to-night:

I'm too sleepy to read, and too lazy to write;
So I'll watch the blue rings, as they eddy and twirl,
And in gossamer wreathings coquettishly curl.
In the stillness of night and the sparseness of chimes
There's a fleetness in fancy, a frolic in rhymes:
There's a world of romance that persistently clings
To the azurine curving of Cigarette Rings!

What a picture comes back from the past-away times!—
They are lounging once more 'neath the sweet-scented limes:

See, how closely he watches the Queen of Coquettes,
As her white hands roll deftly those small cigarettes!
He believes in her smiles and puts faith in her sighs,
While he's dazzled by light from her fathomless eyes:
Ah! the dearest of voices delightfully sings
Through the weird intertwining of Cigarette Rings!

How sweet was her song in the bright summer-time,
When winds whispered low, 'neath the tremulous lime !
How sweet too that bunch of forget-me-nots blue—
The love he thought lasting, the words he thought
true ! . . .

*Ah ! the words of a woman concerning such things
Are weak and unstable as Cigarette Rings !*

AT CHARING CROSS.

A BUSY scene, I must confess,
The Continental Mail Express !
The babbling of boys and porters,
The shouting of the luggage-sorters.
Indeed a vast and varied sight,
Beneath the pale electric light ;
The roll of trucks, the noise, the hustle,
The bawling “ By yer leave ! ” and bustle,
While anxious tourists blame and bless
The Continental Mail Express !

Though wanting minutes ten to Eight,
Still people hurry through the gate :
Now London’s dull, the Season over,
They flit from Charing Cross to Dover ;
They take their tickets, pay their fare,
They’re booked right through to everywhere !
To lead a life of hopeless worry,
With *Bradshaw*, *Baedeker*, and *Murray*.
And yet they hail with eagerness
The Continental Mail Express !

I think of toil by rail and boat,
And cackle at the *table d'hôte* ;
 Of coin of somewhat doubtful mintage,
 And wine of very gruesome vintage ;
Of passes steep that try the lungs,
And chattering in unknown tongues.
 Of Rhenish hills, Italian fountains,
 Of forests dark, and snowy mountains--
To start, I'd give all I possess,
By Continental Mail Express !

'Tis Eight o'clock, save minutes two—
Here comes a stout, fur-capped Mossoo ;
 He's in a fluster at the wicket
 Because he cannot find his ticket ;
And over there may be espied
A pretty little two days' bride.
 How bored she'll be with six weeks' spooning,
 How wearied with the honeymooning.
Yet *lots* go, leaving no address,
By Continental Mail Express !

Eight-five ! The luggage is complete,
The last arrival in his seat ;
 The porters' labours almost ended,
 The latest evening paper vended.

We wish departing friends “Good-night!”
A whistle blows, the Guard says “Right!”
We watch the red-light’s coruscation,
Then slowly, sadly, leave the station.
All London’s gone, say more or less,
By Continental Mail Express! .

THE MUSIC OF LEAVES.

THE chesnuts droop low by the river,
And shady are Ankerwycke trees ;
The dragon-flies flash and they quiver
To somnolent humming of bees !
But here is a spot of the past time—
I'm many a mile from the Weir—
I'll rest and think over the last time
I ventured to meditate here.
O, chesnuts are shady, and golden are sheaves,
And sweet is the exquisite music of leaves !

I pause in this quaint little harbour,
Quite out of the swirl of the stream ;
With leaves overhead like an arbour,
I smoke, and I ponder, and dream.
The bank, with its rough broken edges,
Exists as in days now remote ;
There's still the faint savour of sedges
And lilies fresh crushed by the boat.
O, breezes are soft, and the dreamer receives
The rarest refrain from the music of leaves !

A brown-eyed and trustful young maiden
Then steer'd this identical skiff,
Her lap with forget-me-nots laden.
I now am forgotten ; but if ?—
No matter ! I see the sweet glory
Of love in those fathomless eycs ;
I tell her an often-told story—
They sparkle with light and surprise !
O, rivers are rapid, and Syrens were thievez,
Their music was naught to the music of leaves !

Ah, Love, do you ever remember
The stream and its musical flow ?
The story I told in September,
The song of the leaves long ago ?
Our love was a beautiful brief song,
As sweet as your voice and your eyes ;
But frail as a lyrical leaf-song,
Inspired by the short summer sighs !
O, summer is short, and the sculler still grieves,
His sorrow is echoed in music of leaves !

CASUAL CAROLS.

IN A BELLAGIO BALCONY.

*The Lazy Minstrel hastens to own he
Prefers the "o" long in "Balcōny!"*

I'LL dream and moon, O will I not?
My views just now are somewhat hazy;
I fancy I am very hot,
I'm certain I am very lazy!
I cannot read, I dare not think,
I'm idle as a *lazzarone*;
So in the sunshine I will blink—
In this Balcōny.

Mama o'er *Tauchnitz* takes a nap,
Papa is reading *Galignani*,
And Loo is conning *Murray's* map,
And humming airs from *Puritani*.
There's Tom-boy Ten in shortened skirts—
Which just reveal her frilled *calzoni*—
And Sweet-and-Twenty, Queen of Flirts,
In this Balcōny !

I've nothing in the world to do,
I like the *dolce far niente* ;
I love the eyes of peerless blue,
And nameless grace of Sweet-and-Twenty !
I've lunched with dainty Violet
Off nectarines and fried *agoni* ;
And now I'll smoke a cigarette,
In this Balcōny.

I do not think I care to talk,
I am not up to much exertion ;
I'm not inclined to ride or walk,
I loathe the very word excursion !
Now shall I heated effort make,
And climb the hill to Serbelloni ?
I'd rather gaze upon the lake—
From this Balcōny.

Or rather gaze on Violet,
This sunny day in sweet September :
Her eyes I never can forget,
Her voice I always shall remember !
P'r'aps lazy lovers oft are slow—
I whispered *con espressione*—
And what I *meant* to say I know,
In this Balcōny !

Alas ! that *Murray* dropped by Loo,
Mama awakens in a minute !
Papa has read his paper through,
And finds, of course, there's nothing in it !
And Tom-boy Ten is full of fun,
She's off somewhere to ride a pony,
And Vi has gone ! So fades the sun—
From this Balcōny !

A RIVERAIN RHYME.

BESIDE the river in the rain—
The sopping sky is leaden grey—
I watch the drops run down the pane !

Assuming the Tapleyan vein—
I sit and drone a dismal lay—
Beside the river in the rain !

With pluvial patter for refrain ;
I've smoked the very blackest clay ;
I watch the drops run down the pane.

I've gazed upon big fishes slain,
That on the walls make brave display,
Beside the river in the rain.

It will not clear, 'tis very plain,
The rain will last throughout the day—
I watch the drops run down the pane.

I almost feel my boundless brain
At last shows signs of giving way ;
Beside the river in the rain.

O, never will I stop again—
No more will I attempt to stay,
Beside the river in the rain,
To watch the drops run down the pane !

THE LITTLE REBEL.

PRINCESS of pretty pets,
Tomboy in trouserettes ;
Eyes are like violets—
Gleefully glancing !
Skin, like an otter sleek,
Nose, like a baby-Greek,
Sweet little dimple-cheek—
Merrily dancing !

Lark-like her song it trills,
Over the dale and hills,
Hark how her laughter thrills !
Joyously joking.
Yet, should she feel inclined,
I fancy you will find,
She, like all womankind,
Oft is provoking !

Often she stands on chairs,
Sometimes she unawares
Slyly creeps up the stairs,
 Secretly hiding :
Then will this merry maid—
She is of nought afraid—
Come down the balustrade,
 Saucily sliding !

Books she abominates,
But see her go on skates,
And over five-barred gates
 Fearlessly scramble !
Climbing up apple-trees,
Barking her supple knees,
Flouting mama's decrees—
 Out for a ramble.

Now she is good as gold,
Then she is pert and bold,
Minds not what she is told,
 Carelessly tripping.
She is an April miss,
Bounding to grief from bliss,
Often she has a kiss—
 Sometimes a whipping !

Naughty but best of girls,
Through life she gaily twirls,
Shaking her sunny curls—
 Careless and joyful.
Ev'ry one on her dotes,
Carolling merry notes,
Pet in short petticoats—
 Truly tomboyful !

CANOEBIAL BLISS.

*My Pegasus won't bear a bridle,
A bit, or a saddle, or shoe :
I'm doing my best to be idle,
And sing from my bass-wood canoe !*

O, SUMMER is sweet, and its sky is so blue—
O, The days are so long, and my heart is so light,
When drifting about in my bass-wood canoe !

Where am I? No matter! It's nothing to you—
The breeze is so pleasant, the sun is so bright—
O, Summer is sweet, and its sky is so blue !

I glory in thinking there's nothing to do.
I moon and I ponder from morn until night,
When drifting about in my bass-wood canoe !

My face and my hands are of tropical hue.
In spotless white flannel my limbs are bedight.
O, Summer is sweet, and its sky is so blue !

But O, it is pleasant to dream the day through,
Half-hidden by rushes, and well out of sight,
When drifting about in my bass-wood canoe !

I crush the white lilies, 'tis almost " too too ; "
I dream to the song of the dragon-flies' flight—
O, Summer is sweet, and its sky is so blue !

Somewhere on the Thames, I can't give you a clue,
Be able to find me, you possibly might,
When drifting about in my bass-wood canoe !

And if you are pleasant, and I'm in the cue,
Through azurine smoke you may hear me recite—
O, Summer is sweet, and its sky is so blue,
When drifting about in my bass-wood canoe !

ROSIE.

DRAWN BY LEECH.

DOWN on the sands there strolls a merry maid,
Aglow with ruddy health and gladsome glee ;
She breasts the breezes of the summer sea,
And lets each zephyr trifle with each braid ;
Laughs gaily as her petticoats evade
Her girlish grasp and wildly flutter free,
As, bending to some boisterous decree,
The neatest foot and ankle are displayed.

Her youthful rounded figure you may trace
Half pouting, as rude Boreas unsurls
A wealth of snowy frillery and lace,
A glory of soft golden rippled curls.
Comes, blushing with a rare unconscious grace,
The bonniest of England's bonny girls !

SKINDLE'S IN OCTOBER.

OCTOBER is the time of year ;
For no regattas interfere,
The river then is fairly clear
Of steaming “ spindles,”
You then have space to moor your punt,
You then can get a room in front
Of Skindle's.

When Taplow Woods are russet-red,
When half the poplar-leaves are shed,
When silence reigns at Maidenhead,
And autumn dwindleth,
'Tis good to lounge upon that lawn,
Though beauties of last June are gone
From Skindle's.

We toiled in June all down to Bray,
And yarns we spun for Mab and May ;
O, who would think such girls as they
Would turn out swindles ?
But *now* we toil and spin for jack,
And in the evening we get back
To Skindle's.

And after dinner—passing praise—
'Tis sweet to meditate and laze,
To watch the ruddy logs ablaze ;
And as one kindles
The big post-prandial cigar,
My friend, be thankful that we are
At Skindle's.

IN MY EASY CHAIR.

'T IS simply detestable weather !
At home I'm determined to stay ;
A fortune I've spent in shoe-leather,
And ruined three hats ev'ry day !
Umbrellas I've borrowed and broken,
And angered their owners no doubt :
These things I consider a token,
'Tis not the least use to go out !
But let the weather be foul or fair,
I'll sit and smile in my Easy Chair !

The morning's uncertain and hazy—
I can't be quite sure of the time—
I'm feeling exhausted and lazy,
Not equal to reason or rhyme !
While streets still are muddy and sloppy,
While bitter the easterly breeze,
I'll maunder and nod like a poppy,
And take forty winks at mine ease !
My dreams are pleasant, so I don't care.
I'll sit and snooze in my Easy Chair !

There's nothing of note in the papers,
There's nothing to do or to say :
We suffer extremely from "vapours"—
The fog and the damp of each day.
Though cities be frozen or flooded,
'Tis useless to fume or to fret ;
Though friends are bespattered and muddled—
I'll smoke a serene cigarette !
And all the burdens I have to bear,
I'll smoke away in my Easy Chair !

Within it is snug and quiescent,
Without it persistently pours ;
My chair is well-cushioned and pleasant,
Though life's full of angles and bores !
My room is deliciously torrid,
By frost or by rain I'm unvext ;
The world is decidedly horrid—
So call me the month after next !
The world may roll and may tear its hair,
I'll roll and laugh in my Easy Chair !

BLANKTON WEIR.

'TIS a queer old pile of timbers, all gnarled and
rough and green,
Both moss-o'ergrown and weed-covered, and jaggèd too,
I ween !
'Tis battered and 'tis spattered, all worn and knocked
about,
Beclamped with rusty rivets, and bepatched with timbers
stout ;
A tottering, trembling structure, enshrining memories
dear,
This weather-beaten barrier, this quaint old Blankton
Weir.

While leaning on those withered rails, what feelings oft
come back,
As I watch the white foam sparkling and note the current's
track ;
What crowds of fleeting fancies come dancing through
my brain !
And the good old days of Blankton, I live them o'er
again ;

What hopes and fears, gay smiles, sad tears, seem mirrored
in the mere,
While looking on its glassy face by tell-tale Blankton
Weir!

I've seen it basking 'neath the rays of summer's golden
glow,
And when sweetly by the moonlight, silver ripples ebb
and flow ;
When Nature starts in spring-time, awakening into life ;
When autumn leaves are falling, and the yellow corn is
rise ;
'Mid the rime and sleet of winter, all through the live-
long year,
I've watched the water rushing through this tide-worn
Blankton Weir.

And I mind me of one even, so calm and clear and
bright,
What songs we sang—whose voices rang—that lovely
summer night.
Where are the hearty voices now who trolled those good
old lays?
And where the silvery laughter that rang in bygone days?

Come back, that night of long ago ! Come back, the moonlight clear !

When hearts beat light, and eyes were bright, about old Blankton Weir.

Was ever indolence so sweet, were ever days so fine, As when we lounged in that old punt and played with rod and line ?

'Tis true few fish we caught there, but the good old ale we quaffed,

As we chatted, too, and smoked there, and idled, dreamed, and laughed :

Then thought we only of to-day, of morrow had no fear, For sorrow scarce had tinged the stream that flowed through Blankton Weir.

Those dreamy August afternoons, when in our skiff we lay, To hear the current murmuring as slow it swirled away , The plaintive hum of dragon-fly, the old weir'splash and roar,

While *Some-one's* gentle voice, too, seems whispering there once more ;

Come back, those days of love and trust, those times of hope and fear,

When girls were girls, and hearts were hearts, about old Blankton Weir !

Those brilliant sunny mornings when we tumbled out of bed,
And hurried on a few rough clothes, and to the river sped !
What laughing joyance hung about those merry days agone,
We clove the rushing current at the early flush of dawn !
Tremendous headers took we in the waters bright and clear,
And splashed and dashed, and dived and swam, just off old Blankton Weir.

Then that pleasant picnic-party, when all the girls were there,
In pretty morning dresses and with freshly-braided hair ;
Fair Annie, with those deep-blue eyes, and rosy, laughing Nell,
Dark Helen, sunny Amy, and the stately Isobel ;
Ah ! Lizzie, 'twas but yesterday—at least 'twould so appear—
We plighted vows of constancy, not far from Blankton Weir.

Those flashing eyes, those brave true hearts, are gone,
and few remain
To mourn the loss of sunny hours that ne'er come back again :

Some married are—ah ! me, how changed—for they will
think no more
Of how they joined our chorus there, or helped to pull
the oar :
One gentle voice is hushed for aye—we miss a voice so
dear—
Who cheered along with evensong our path by Blankton
Weir.

Amid the whirl of weary life—I hear it o'er and o'er,
That plaintive well-loved lullaby—the old weir's distant
roar :
It gilds the cloud of daily toil with sunshine's fitful gleams,
It breaks upon my slumber, and I hear it in my dreams :
Like music of the good old times, it strikes upon mine ear—
If there's an air can banish care, 'tis that of Blankton Weir !

I know the river's rushing, but it rushes not for me,
I feel the morning blushing, though I am not there to see ;
For younger hearts now live and love where once we used
to dwell,
And others laugh, and dream, and sing, in spots we loved
so well ;
Their motto "*Carpe diem*"—'twas ours for many a year—
As show these rhymes of sunny times about old Blankton
Weir

DIFFERENT VIEWS.

A CHRISTMAS DUET.

O, CHRISTMAS comes but once a year !
(*And even that is once too many ;*)

Hurrah for all its right good cheer !

(*I wish I had my share of any !*)

What flavour of the good old times !

(*What hopeless and egregious folly !*)

What evergreens and merry chimes !

(*What prickles ever lurk in holly !*)

Indeed it is a merry time ;

(*But O ! those countless Christmas numbers !*)

For now we see the pantomime,

(*And now the waits disturb our slumbers.*)

We've kisses 'neath the mistletoe—

(*I hate such rough, unseemly callers !*)

And hearty welcomes, frost and snow ;

(*Yes, in the illustrated papers.*)

Around the groaning Christmas board,
(*Which never equals expectations,*)
Where old and young are in accord—
(*I hate the most of my relations !*)
I view the turkey with delight,
(*A tough old bird beyond all question !*)
The blazing pudding—what a sight !
(*'Tis concentrated indigestion !*)

Laugh on, ye merry girls and boys !
(*Each year the Christmas boxes strengthen,*)
Each year brings with it countless joys ;
(*The Christmas bills each year they lengthen.*)
To all we pledge the brimming glass !
(*What days of gorging and unreason !*)
Too quick such merry moments pass—
(*Why can't we skip the "festive season" ?*)

TWO NAUGHTY GIRLS.

A SCULLER'S SKETCH.

AS I go slowly drifting by,
Two lazy lasses I espy ;
Two pretty pets who lounge and moon,
Who dream and take their ease,
And chatter through the afternoon,
Beneath the trees.

The one is Beatie, t'other Bell,
No pow'r on earth will make me tell
The surname of each lovely flow'r—
This pair of busy B's,
Who *don't* improve each shining hour,
Beneath the trees !

Al ! why should one sweet damsel frown,
And droop her pretty eyelids down ?
Or quickly hush her merry notes,
And clasp her pliant knees ?
A pouting pet in petticoats,
Beneath the trees !

Has Bell at Beatic dared to sneer,
Or Beatie chanced at Bell to jeer?

Has either vented girlish spite,
Because she likes to tease?

Or oves, like dogs, to bark and bite,
Beneath the trees!

Has either called the other "flirt"?
Does Bell object to Beatic's skirt?

Or Bella's sweet forget-me-nots,
Miss Beatrix displease?—

I'd like to read them Doctor Watts,
Beneath the trees.

I drift and leave each dainty maid,
Still sweet and sulky in the shade,
With all their sunny laughing curls
A-flutter in the breeze:
Two nice but very naughty girls,
Beneath the trees!

I said unto myself, Ha! ha!
My dears, if I were your mama,
Most quickly I'd pack off to bed
Two naughty busy B's—
Who quarrel and make eyclids red,
Beneath the trees!

COULEUR DE ROSE.

A SIX MONTHS' COURTSIIIP.

HER soft sables, you must know,
Kept off winter's frost and snow,
And the cruel wind did blow

When we met :

The demurest little nun,
Though she'd sometimes change in fun,
Like a snowflake in the sun,—

Little pet !

Pray what meant those frequent sighs,
When those fathomless brown eyes
Sometimes gazed with glad surprise
Into mine ?

It was joy to be alone,
With my arm around her zone,
And to claim her for my own
Valentine !

'Fore the romping wind of March
Was she bending like a larch,
As her glance seemed yet more arch
 Through her curls :
Came in view the ankles neat,
Were revealed the dainty feet,
And the *chaussure* of my sweet
 Girl of girls !

Ah ! my brightest fay of fays
Was most fickle in her ways,
In chameleon April days—
 Sun and rain !
She would sometimes be put out,
She would laugh or cry and pout ;
Smiling through her tears in doubt,
 Joy and pain !

But in May so freshly fair
She would pull its blossoms rare,
Just to twine them in her hair—
 Gay and wild :
A sweet pæan of perfume,
A gay sunny song of bloom,
She would chase away all bloom—
 Laughing child !

Ah ! her cheek will shame the rose,
With the tint that comes and goes,
And more radiantly glows,
When it's prest !

Whilst her loving eyes flash bright,
With a sweet and sparkling light,
And white roses scarce look white
In her breast !

In the balmy summer time,
With gay roses in their prime,
No one deems it is a crime

Then to "spoon" !
Ah ! how quick the time then sped,
Now I wonder what we said,
'Neath the roses white and red—
Once in June ?

O ! when summer skies were blue,
And we fancied hearts were true,
While the long day loving through—
Who'd suppose ?

Our grand castles built in Spain,
Or that love could ever wane,
And its fragrance but remain,
Like the rose ?

IN STRAWBERRY TIME.

HOOT, hot glows the sunshine in laughing July,
Scarce flutter the leaves in the soft summer
sigh :

The rooks scarcely swing on the tops of the trees,
While river-reeds nod to the lime-scented breeze :
A roseleaf, a-bask in the sunshiny gleam,
Half sleeps in the dimples that chequer the stream ;
The dragon-fly hushes his day-dreamy lay,
The silver trout sulks in his sedge-shaded bay—
While our thoughts sweetly run in a soft singing rhyme,
As we lazily loiter in strawberry time !

Sweet, sweet is the scent of the newly-mown hay,
Light borne by the breeze on a bright summer's day ;
And cool is the sound of the musical splash,
As bright bubbles fall in the fountain and flash.
'Tis joy then to wander in gay golden hours,
And dream 'mid the hues of the bright-tinted flow'rs ;
When the velvety lawn is most soft to the tread,
And ruddy fruit hangs in the leaf-covered bed—
Then the roundest, the sweetest, the best of the prime,
Will we gather together in strawberry time !

Joy, joy 'tis to whisper and laugh in the shade,
And pluck the ripe fruit for my hazel-eyed maid ;
To watch her delight as she eagerly clips
A pink British Queen with her soft pouting lips !
While lovingly gazing I'm apt to compare
The warm blushing berries with lips of my fair ;
I'm doubtful, indeed, if the fruit of the South
Could equal the charm of her ripe little mouth—
'Tis so round and so soft, 'twould be scarcely a crime
All my doubts to dispel in sweet strawberry time !

Light, light is the laughter that carelessly rings,
And sweet is the carol she tenderly sings !
I murmur a story we all of us know—
Her soft dainty dimples, they come and they go ;
Her eyelids droop down o'er those sweet little eyes,
Her laughter is hushed in a tumult of sighs :
Those pretty, plump fingers, red-stained to the tips,
All tremble, while pouting are rosy-red lips.
Then the bard whispers low, 'neath the tremulous lime,
" Lips sweeter than fruit are in strawberry time ! "

NUMBER ONE.

PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG LADY.

"No. 1," in a collection of one thousand five hundred and eighty-three works of art, at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy.

MY favourite, you must know,
 In the Piccadilly Show,
 Is the portrait of a lass
 Bravely done.
 'Mid the fifteen eighty-three
 Works of art that you may see,
 There is nothing can surpass—
 "Number One" !

Very far above the line
 Is this favourite of mine ;
 You may see her smiling there
 O'er the crowds.
 If you bring a good *lorgnette*,
 You may see my dainty pet ;
 Like the Jungfrau, pink and fair,
 'Mid the clouds.

My enchanting little star,
How I wonder what you are,
With your rosy laughing lips
Full of fun.

Have you many satellites,
Do you shine so bright o' nights,
That there's nothing can eclipse
"Number One"?

Are you constant in your loves?
Do you change them with your gloves?
Pray does Worth pervade your train—
Or your heart?
Are you fickle, are you leal,
Are your sunny tresses real,
Or your roses only vain
Works of art?

I sincerely envy him
Who the fortune had to limn
Your bewitching hazel eyes
With his brush:
Who could study ev'ry grace
In your winsome little face,
And the subtle charm that lies
In your blush.

I am sure it is a shame
That your pretty face and frame,
Ruthless hangers out of view
Seek to hide :
But no doubt Sir Frederick L——,
And his myrmidons as well,
Fancy angels such as you,
Should be “skied” !

Ah ! were I but twenty-two,
I would hinge the knee to you,
And most humbly kiss your glove
At your throne :
Thrice happy he whose sighs
Draw this sweet Heart Union prize
In the lottery of Love
For his own !

If I knew but your papa,
Could I only “ask mama,”
It is clear enough to me
As the sun,
That all through this weary life,
‘Mid its pleasure, pain, and strife,
All my care and love should be
“Number One.”

AFTER BREAKFAST.

THE ruddy ripe tomato,
In china bowl of ice ;
And grouse worth a sonata,
Undoubtedly are nice !
A pint of sound Hochheimer,
A dainty speckled trout,
Suffices for the Rhymer,
To break his fast no doubt !
I watch the busy bees on
The leaf beneath the lime :
It's much too hot for reason,
And far too warm for rhyme !

'Tis hot as in the tropics—
Too hot to ride or walk—
I have no store of topics,
I do not care to talk !
No matutinal journal
Has reached me—Do I fret ?
'Neath leafy shade supernal,
I smoke a cigarette !

I care not for the Season,
Trade, Politics, or Crime :
It's much too hot for reason,
And far too warm for rhyme !

Pray, who would wear a tall hat ?
Or buttoned in frock coat,
Would countless places call at,
When he might moon in boat ?
Exploring river reaches,
And doing naught at all,
But plucking juicy peaches
That ripen on the wall !
I put just what I please on,
I take no heed of time :
It's much too hot for reason,
And far too warm for rhyme !

My thoughts all run together,
Regretfully I find ;
They're melted by the weather,
To shapeless mass of mind !
It's much too hot for thinking,
Too sultry 'tis to chaff ;
For eating or for drinking,
Too torrid c'en to laugh !

I know this sounds like treason—
I do not care one dime—
It's much too hot for reason,
And far too warm for rhyme !

IN AN OLD CITY CHURCH.

ONE dull, foggy day in December,
When biting and bleak was the air,
I once lost my way, I remember,
 And paused in a quaint City square.
Though lacking all splendour or gladness,
 The flavour of good long ago
Clung close to the place in its sadness,
 And grave-yard half covered with snow ;
While the black, puny branches, all leafless and bare,
Seemed to add to the gloom of this dull City square !

The railings were rusty and grimy,
 The church looked so mouldy and grim ;
The houses seemed haunted and grimy,
 The windows were gruesome and dim.
The iron gate scrooped on its hinges,
 The clock struck a querulous chime,
As though it were feeling some twinges
 'Twas almost forgotten by Time.
But I opened the door, and the picture was fair,
In the fine ancient church, in this sad City square !

A fair little lass, holly-laden—
With eyes of cerulean blue—
Is helping a sweet dark-eyed maiden
Twine ivy with laurel and yew ;
How busy the deft taper fingers !
What taste and what art they display !
How lovingly each of them lingers,
Adjusting a leaf or a spray !—
I close the door softly, I've no business there,
And drift out in the fog of the grim City square.

A LITTLE LOVE-LETTER.

O PRETTY pet with the tangled hair,
Down by the sighing summer sea—
O dimpled darling with cheeks so fair,
Tell me, O dearest, when musing there,
Will you think of me ?

O sweetest sweet, when the salt breeze sighs
'Mid silken locks ever flowing free,
While gulls glint white against sleepy skies,
Will looks of those bright brown loving eyes
E'er be turned to me ?

Ah, laughing child, when your eyes beam bright,
And lips are parted in girlish glee ;
When the shore is glad in still summer night,
With your sweet soft smile, and your laughter light,
Do you smile on me ?

When the moon is up, and sleeps the land
 To tender music in minor key ;
When the silver-ripples hush the strand
 And scarcely dimple the golden sand,
 Will you dream of me ?

Poor little heart ! when your cheeks are wet
 With tears that sadden one's heart to see,
Your moist lips tremble—you can't forget
 Sometimes the sun through the rain shines, pet,
 When you weep for me !

STRAY SUNBEAMS.

A WAY with great-coats and umbrellas !
Put all fury garments away !
Let glossiest hats—all you fellas—
 Gleam bright in the light of to-day !
The air it is balmy and vernal,
 We feel a new life has begun :
For gone is the weather hibernal—
 And here is the Sun !

The genial sunbeams, in-streaming,
 Flash bright on my pen as I write !
The paper is glowing and gleaming—
 My eyes are quite dazed with the light !
No longer I growl or I shiver,
 Nor each fellow-creature I shun :
I dream of the joys of the River—
 For here is the Sun !

For England, the atmosphere's splendid,
 We live and we breathe now again !
We fancy our trouble is ended,
 For gone is the fog and the rain :

I laugh and I sing and I chuckle,
I rhyme and I dance and I pun !
I knock on the pane with my knuckle—
For here is the Sun !

What portents of pleasure I fancy
Return with these bright sunny rays !
What visions of lazing I *can* see,
Of languorous, sweet Summer days ;
Of yachting and sea-side diversions,
And getting as brown as a bun :
Of rambles and Alpine excursions—
For here is the Sun !

I think of long days at lawn-tennis,
Of dreams in my bass-wood canoe,
Of gondola-lounging at Venice,
And skies sempiternally blue !
I muse o'er the pleasures of playtime,
Of laziness, laughter, and fun ;
Of lime-scented zephyrs and haytime—
But *where* is the Sun ?

Sun retires behind clouds, rain patters on the pane, and the Lazy One goes to bed.

PEARL.

PEARL, O Pearl !
Naught but a lissom English girl,
So sweet and simple ;
Naught but the charm of golden curl,
Of blush and dimple—
Pearl, O Pearl !

Sweet, ah, sweet !
'Tis pleasant lolling at your feet
In summer playtime ;
Ah, how the moments quickly fleet
In sunny hay-time—
Sweet, ah, sweet !

Dream, ah, dream !
The sedges sing by swirling stream
A lovely brief song ;
The poplars chant in sunny gleam
A lulling leaf-song—
Dream, ah, dream !

Stay, O stay !
We cannot dream all through the day,
 Demure and doubtful :
When shines the sun we must make hay,
 When lips are poutful—
Stay, O stay !

A NUTSHELL NOVEL.

VOL. I.

A WINNING wile,
A sunny smile,
A feather :
A tiny talk,
A pleasant walk,
Together !

VOL. II.

A little doubt,
A playful pout,
Capricious :
A merry miss,
A stolen kiss,
Delicious ! !

VOL. III.

You ask mama,
Consult papa,
With pleasure :
And both repent,
This rash event,
At leisure ! ! !

THE PINK OF PERFECTION.

*With manly step and stalwart stride,
The Minstrel paced the pier at Ryde !
And as he shook those hoary locks,
He gazed upon the pink, pink frocks !*

WITH frocks and their wearers to dazzle my eyes,
Their glories, I scarce dare to sing 'em :
I timidly gaze and I glance in surprise,
At beauties in cambric and gingham !
A Paris I feel in this Garden of Dress,
And, had I to make a selection—
The Apple of Gold, I most freely confess,
I'd give to the Pink of Perfection !

It must not remind you of raspberry ice,
Nor cheek of a milkmaid or cotter ;
A lobster-like redness is not at all nice,
Nor feverish glow of the blotter ;
It should not recall a Bardolphian nose,
Nor yet a pomegranate bisection—
Throughout the whole garden you'll scarce find a rose,
A match for the Pink of Perfection !

A strawberry crushed, almost smothered in cream,
 Nearly matches the colour it may be ;
The Jungfran just flushed with the earliest beam,
 The hue of the palm of a baby :
The faint ruddy tone you may see in a shell,
 The rose in a young girl's complexion—
All or any of these, it is easy to tell,
 Will pass for the Pink of Perfection !

This frock when it's made with most exquisite taste,
 And fits like a glove on the shoulder ;
With yoke and full pleats and a band at the waist,
 Will gladden the passing beholder !
With lace and with buttons of mother o' pearl—
 You'll say, on maturest reflection,
The best of all garbs for a pretty young girl,
 No doubt is the Pink of Perfection !

Then if such a dress you meet down by the sea,
 And find, when you've carefully eyed it,
In make and in fashion 'tis good as can be,
 With a neat little figure inside it ;
And a sweet little face peeping over a ruff,
 Which laughs at your lengthy inspection,
I think you'll admit I have said quite enough—
 You've found out the Pink of Perfection !

THE IMPARTIAL.

A BOAT-RACE SKETCH.

IN sorrow and joy she has seen the beginning—
Her lightness of spirit half dashed by the “blues”—
With cheers in her heart for the crew who are winning,
While tears fill her eyes for those fated to lose.

If you'll narrowly watch, 'mid the noise and contention,
You'll note, as her Arab paws proudly the dust,
A deftly-twined bouquet of speedwell and gentian
Beneath her white collar half carelessly thrust !

The tint of a night in the still summer weather
Her tight-fitting habit just serves to unfold,
While delicate cuffs are scarce fastened together
By dainty-wrought setters of turquoise and gold.

Ah ! climax of sweet, girlish, neutral devices—
What smiles for the winners, for losers what sighs !—
She has twined her fair hair with the colours of Isis,
While those of the Cam glitter bright in her eyes !

A TRAVELLER'S TARANTELLA.

Written in "Murray's Handbook," while the band in the Piazza San Marco was playing the Tarantella from Masaniello.

ALL that the tourist can dream of or hear about,
Crowds on your sight as you carelessly peer about,
Quaint water streets you so carefully steer about,

See the Rialto, and Square of St. Mark !
Floating in gondolas, laughing and jollity,
Cyprian wine of the very best quality,
At Florian's *caffè*—mid fun and frivolity—

Venice delightful from daylight to dark !

Musicians in plenty,
Play "*Ecco ridente*,"
Or "*Com e gentil*," in the still summer night ;
If you're in a hurry,
Pray look in your *Murray*—
You'll find his description is perfectly right !

Albergo Reale and English society,
Bric-à-brac shops in their endless variety,
Plenty of pigeons not fearful of pie-ety,
Flutter and peck 'neath the bluest of skies.

Dreaming in Venice? Ah, wildest of fallacies—
Bronzes and sculpture, mosaics and chalices,
Convents and churches, and prisons and palaces,
See as you stand on the grim Bridge of Sighs !

The ballads of Byron,
You'll find will environ
The Doges and dodges and Brides of the Sea.
Don't get in a flurry,
But read it in *Murray*—
If you don't care about it, then listen to me !

Thousands of thirsty mosquitoes are biting one,
Silvery moonlight is ever delighting one,
Music and mirth every moment inviting one—
Dreary old London we quickly forgot !
Shylock and Portia—in short, the whole kit of 'em,
Readers of Shakespeare recall ev'ry bit of 'em ;
Troublesome guides, you can never get quit of 'em—
Pictures by Titian and old Tintoret !
The sock and the buskin,
With Rogers and Ruskin,
Are mixed in a muddle with palace and sight !
It may be a worry,
But don't forget *Murray*,
He'll throw on your darkness some excellent light !

CAFFÈ FLORIAN, VENEZIA.

IN A MINOR KEY.

I 'M sick of the world and its trouble,
I'm weary of pleasures that cloy,
I see through the bright-coloured bubble,
And find no enjoyment in joy.

Is all that we earn worth the earning?
Is all that we gain worth the prize?
Is all that we learn worth the learning?
Is pleasure but pain in disguise?

Is sorrow e'er worth our dejection?
Is fame but a flatterer's spell?
Is love ever worth our affection?
Le jeu vaut-il, donc, la chandelle?

O, where are the eyes that enthralled us,
And where are the lips that we kissed?
Where the syren-like voices that called us,
And where all the chances we missed?

We know not what mortals call pleasure—
For clouded are skies that were blue ;
To dross now has melted our treasure,
And false are the hearts that were true.

The flowers we gathered are faded,
The leaves of our laurels are shed ;
Our spirit is broken and jaded,
The hopes of our youth are all dead.

We feel life is hopeless and dreary,
Now night has o'ershadowed our day ;
Bright fruits of this earth only weary,
They ripen—to fall and decay !

I'm sick of the world and its trouble,
For rest and seclusion I thirst ;
I'm tired of the gay tinted bubble,
That brighteneth only to burst !

A SHOWER-SONG.

MY heart was light and whole aboard—
As I sculled swift by Harleyford
The rain began to patter—
But when I saw in Hurley Lock
That Naiad in a gingham frock,
'Twas quite another matter !
The banks are soft with mud and slosh,
And shiny is each mackintosh,
Each hat and coat well soaken ;
My spirits droop, and as I scan
That Beauty in a trim randan,
I fear my heart is broken !
She hath a graceful little head,
Her lips are ripe and round and red,
Her teeth are short and pearly ;
And on a rosy sun-kissed cheek
Her dimples play at hide-and-seek,
Within the lock at Hurley !

I strive to make a mental note,
The while she lounges in her boat
 Beneath the big umbrella.
I wonder if she's Gwendoline,
Or Gillian, or Geraldine,
 Or Sylvia, or Stella ?
Is she engaged to Stroke or Bow ?
I would they could assure me now
 She loves to flirt with others !
Will stalwart Sculls e'er claim her hand ?
How gladly would I understand
 Her Crew are naught but brothers !
Her hat with lilies is bedight,
Her voice is low, her laugh is light,
 Her figure slight and girly.
How cheerfully I'd take a trip,
With such a Pilot for my ship,
 And sail away from Hurley !

I wonder if her heart is true ?
I know her eyes are peerless blue,
 Long lashes downward sweeping ;
A snow-white ruff around her throat,
Beneath her pouting petticoat
 A little foot out-peeping.

O, is she wooed and is she won,
Or is she very fond of fun ?

I make a thousand guesses !

A sweet young face, so full of hope,
A dainty hand on tiller-rope,

And raindrops in her tresses.

Three tiny rosebuds lightly rest
Within the haven of her breast—

Her locks are short and curly.

The sun is gone ! Down comes the rain !
I leave my heart cleft well in twain
Within the Lock at Hurley !

HURLEY LOCK, *June.*

THE SOCIAL ZODIAC.



JANUARY.

UPON the Ice, 'tis nice to glide,
A merry maiden by your side !
The air is keen, the day is fine,
You think the sport is most divine,
When skimming o'er the frozen tide.

To Miss Chinchilla you confide,
How proud you are to be her guide ;
Then try to cut some quaint design
Upon the Ice.

With measured motion, rhythmic stride,
You put on speed and put on side :
You cut the figures Eight and Nine—
And sometimes on your back recline !
Such falls will sometimes come to pride,
Upon the Ice.

FEBRUARY.

SAIN'T VALENTINE ! The post is late !
No letters come—'tis long past Eight !
But on this bright auspicious day
Frivolity holds laughing sway,
And sober people have to wait !

The burdened postmen moan their fate,
This Festival they reprobate ;
And often think they'd like to flay
Saint Valentine !

But in these views you'll find Miss Kate
Does not at all participate ;
And Beryl, Baby, Minnie, May,
With Gertie, Ethel, Lily, Fay,
Right gleefully commemorate—
Saint Valentine !

MARCII.

O WIND of March ! O biting breeze !
It nips the nose and nips the trees ;
It whirls with fury down the street,
It makes us flee in quick retreat,
And gives us cold and makes us sneeze !

It makes us cough and choke and wheeze,
With painful back and aching knees ;
With dire discomfort 'tis replete,
O Wind of March !

Our hands we're glad enough to squeeze,
In cuffs and muffs and muffatees ;
'Tis charged with blinding, cutting sleet,
It spoils our temper, chills our feet,
And brings the Doctor lots of fees—
O Wind of March !

APRIL.

A N April Day, so fresh and bright—
(*Twill rain, I'm sure, before the night!*
We've done with Winter blasts unkind—
(*Don't leave your mackintosh behind,*
'*Twould be a fatal oversight!*)

In Spring-like garb we'll go bedight—
(*'Tis sure to rain, just out of spite!*
And most perplexing you will find,
An April Day!)

The sky is blue, the clouds are light—
(*I trust your Camp is water-tight!*)
To sing and laugh we feel inclined—
(*Here comes a storm of rain and wind!*
And hail, that's quite enough to blight,
An April Day!)

MAY.

A PRIVATE View? 'Tis plain to you,
'Tis neither "private" nor a "view" ;
And yet for tickets people rush,
To mingle in the well-dressed crush,
And come and wonder who is who.

The beauties, poets, actors, too,
With patrons, painters—not a few,
Are elements that help to flush
A Private View.

The pictures, you can't hope to do ;
You're angered by the "precious" crew,
And pallid maids who flop and gush.
While carping critics who cry "Tush!"
And wildly wrangle, make you rue
A Private View.

JUNE.

IN Rotten Row, 'tis nice, you know,
To see the tide of Fashion flow !
Though hopeless cynics carp and croon—
I do not care one macaroon—
But love to watch the passing show !

You'll find it anything but slow,
To laugh and chaff with those you know ;
And pleasant then to sit at noon,
In Rotten Row !

When Summer breezes whisper low,
And countless riders come and go ;
Beneath the trees in leafy June,
I love to sit and muse and moon—
While beauties canter to and fro—
In Rotten Row !

JULY.

ON Henley Bridge, in sweet July,
A gentle breeze, a cloudless sky !
Indeed it is a pleasant place,
To watch the oarsmen go the pace,
As gasping crowds go roaring by.

And O, what dainty maids you spy,
What tasteful toilets you descry,
What symphonies in frills and lace,
On Henley Bridge !

But if you find a luncheon nigh—
A *mayonnaise*, a toothsome pie—
The chance you'll hasten to embrace !
You'll soon forget about the Race,
And take your Giesler cool and dry—
On Henley Bridge !

AUGUST.

BESIDE the Sea, upon the strand
The sun is hot, the day is grand :
I think you will agree with me,
Upon the shore 'tis nice to be,
Amid the shingle and the sand.

Your hands get brown, your face is tanned,
You bathe or noddle to the band ;
Or slowly ride a solemn "gee"
Beside the Sea.

You pace the pier, you idle and
The offing never leave unscanned :
And study, 'neath some grateful lee,
The "blue, the fresh, the ever free" !
The air is pure, your lungs expand,
Beside the Sea !

SEPTEMBER.

A FOREIGN Tour? I apprehend
A hand-bag I should recommend ;
A roll of useful notes from Coutts,
A pocketful of good cheroots,
And *Murray* for your faithful friend.

Some French, on which you can depend,
A chosen chum, you can't offend ;
Are things to make—with tourist-suits—
A Foreign Tour.

You'll visit "lions" without end ;
And all the snowy peaks ascend ;
With *alpenstocks* and hob-nailed boots :
Or ride on mules—the sullen brutes—
There's lots of sport, if you intend
A Foreign Tour !

OCTOBER.

ONCE more at Home ! We've ploughed the main,
We've gone by *diligence* and train ;
Endured the oft-repeated snub,
Of insolent official cub—
In Switzerland, in France, and Spain.

For weeks we've struggled, all in vain,
Some toilet comforts to obtain ;
But *now* we hail our roomy “tub”
Once more at Home.

Though back we come to fog and rain
And chills and bills, we don't complain !
We've heaps of friends, a quiet “rub,”
A pleasant dinner at the Club—
True happiness we now regain,
Once more at Home !

NOVEMBER.

A LONDON Fog, 'tis always here
At this inclement time of year !
When people hang themselves or drown,
And Nature wears her blackest frown,
While all the world is dull and drear.

All form and colour disappear
Within this filthy atmosphere :
'Tis sometimes yellow, sometimes brown,
A London Fog !

It chokes our lungs, our heads feel queer,
We cannot see, can scarcely hear :
So when this murky pall drops down—
Though dearly loving London town—
We feel we cannot quite revere
A London Fog !

DECEMBER.

'N EATH Mistletoe, should chance arise,
You may be happy if you're wise !
Though bored you be with Pantomime
And Christmas fare and Christmas rhyme—
One fine old custom don't despise.

If you're a man of enterprise
You'll find, I venture to surmise,
'Tis pleasant then at Christmas-time
'Neath Mistletoe !

You see they scarcely can disguise
The sparkle of their pretty eyes :
And no one thinks it is a crime,
When goes the merry Christmas chime,
A rare old rite to exercise
'Neath Mistletoe !

IDLE SONGS.



MOTIHER O' PEARL.

O, PEARL is the sweetest creation
E'er shod with the tiniest boots—
I wish she had ne'er a relation,
I wish I'd a balance with Coutts !
They say Pearl is so like her mother ;
Was she like my pet when a girl ?
Will pet become just such another
Some day as the Mother o' Pearl ?

My Pearl is the prettiest kitten,
She laughs—will she ever grow fat ?
Or e'er, with mad jealousy smitten,
Develop the mind of a cat ?
Her figure get round as a bubble ?
Her hair lose its exquisite curl ?
Her chin get undimpled and double,
Like that of the Mother o' Pearl ?

Will Pearl become pert and capricious,
And haughty and give herself airs ?
(I thought, when she looked so delicious
Last night when we sat on the stairs.)

Will she patronise *me* in her bounty,
And boast of her uncle the Earl?
Or talk with cold pride of the county,
As often does Mother o' Pearl?

Will Pearl ever sneer at her betters,
Or e'er act the amateur spy?
And try to read other folk's letters,
Or listen at doors on the sly? . . .
If boy to the man be the father,
Mama to the woman is—girl—
As daughter-in-law I would rather
Not father the Mother o' Pearl!

A LAY OF THE "LION."

At the "Red Lion," Henley-on-Thames, Shenstone
scratched the following well-known lines upon the
window-pane :

"Whoever has travell'd life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think that he has found
His warmest welcome at an inn!"

'TIS joyful to run from the turmoil of town,
To flee from its worry and bustle ;
To put on your flannels and get your hands brown
Is good for the mind and the muscle.
When Goodwood is done and the Season is o'er,
"Tis pleasant the river to ply on,
Or lounge on the lawn, free from worry and bore,
At the "Lion" I

'Tis a finely toned, picturesque, sunshiny place,
Recalling a dozen old stories ;
With a rare British, good-natured, ruddy-hued face,
Suggesting old wines and old Tories :
Ah, many's the magnum of rare crusted port,
Of vintage no one could cry fie on,
Has been drunk by good men of the old-fashioned sort
At the "Lion" I

O, sweet is the exquisite lime-scented breeze
Awaft o'er the Remenham reaches !
What lullaby lurks in the music of trees,
The concert of poplars and beeches !
Shall I go for a row, or lounge in a punt,
The stream—half asleep—throw a fly on ?
Or watch pretty girls feed the cygnets in front
Of the "Lion" !

I see drifting by such a smart little crew,
Bedight in most delicate colours,
In ivory-white and forget-me-not blue—
A couple of pretty girl-scullers.
A pouting young puss, in the shortest of frocks—
A nice little nautical scion—
The good ship she steers, like a clever young "cox.",
Past the "Lion" !

I lazily muse and I smoke cigarettes,
While rhymes I together am stringing ;
I listen and nod to the dreamy duets
The girls on the first-floor are singing.
The sunshine is hot and the summer-breeze sighs,
There's scarcely a cloudlet the sky on—
Ah ! were it but cooler, how I'd moralize
At the "Lion" !

But who can be thoughtful, or lecture, or preach,
While Harry is flirting with Ella,
Or the red lips of Rosie pout over a peach,
Half hid by her snowy umbrella ?
The Infant is drifting down in her canoe,
The Rector his cob canters by on ;
The church clock is chiming a quarter-past two,
Near the "Lion" !

Shall I drop off to sleep, or moon here all day,
And drowsily finish my ballad ?
No ! " Luncheon is ready," I hear some one say ;
" A lobster, a chicken, a salad : "
A cool silver cup of the beadiest ale,
The white table-cloth I descry on—
So clearly 'tis time I concluded my tale
Of the "Lion" !

JENNIE.

SKETCHED BY GAINSBOROUGH.

AH ! thrice happy the crumpled red rose leaves
Asleep on her bosom so warm and white !
And the turquoise ribbon half lost to sight,
In the silken tresses it interweaves !
Thrice happy the mortal who once receives,
From her fathomless eyes so brown and bright,
The radiant glances of inner light,
That glitter and gleam 'neath their drooping eaves.

Ah ! sweet are those eloquent lips a-pout,
Whose pleadings a stoic could scarce resist,
Now rounded in rapture, now drooped in doubt,
But daintily red as if newly kist.
'Tis joy to believe in the truth that lies
Far down in the depths of those sweet brown eyes !

A FAVOURITE LOUNGE.

THIE Season is now at its height,
And crowded each street and each square ;
At nightly receptions we fight,
And pant for a place on the stair !
If you're getting as cross as a bear,
If life you consider a bore,
If not quite the man that you were—
O, toddle down Bond Street at Four !

The scene is bewitching and bright,
The street is beyond all compare ;
The shops are all richly bedight,
The jewellers' windows are rare.
If money you've plenty to spare,
And want to buy presents galore,
Or wish to burk trouble and care—
O, toddle down Bond Street at Four !

In Art if you take a delight,
Of pictures you'll find plenty there ;
And stalls you may get for to-night,
Or visit your artist in hair.

If dulness you hope to forswear,
And wish to meet friends by the score,
Or revel in sunshine and air—
O, toddle down Bond Street at Four !

If driven by duns to despair,
If snubbed by the girl you adore ;
If feeling quite out of repair,
O, toddle down Bond Street at Four !

SPRING CLEANING.

ALL peace and all pleasure are banished :
Abroad now I gladly would roam,
My quiet and comfort have vanished,
A desolate wreck is my home !
The painters are all in possession,
And charwomen come by the score ;
The whitewashers troop in procession,
And spatter from ceiling to floor.
I own I must make a confession—
Spring Cleaning's a terrible bore !

They come in the morning at daybreak,
Just when I'm forgetting my cares,
And into my slumbers how *they* break !
With bustle and tramp on the stairs.
They laugh, and they whistle, and chatter ;
They paint, and they varnish, and size ;
They thump, and they wrangle, and clatter,
And drive away sleep from my eys.
They make me as mad as a hatter,
And cause me quite early to rise !

The staircase is all barricaded,
The handle removed from each door ;
My own sacred Den is invaded—
 My papers all strewn on the floor !
My books and my letters are scattered,
 My pens are nowhere to be found ;
My blue-and-white china is shattered,
 My songs have no space to resound ;
My hat with pink priming's bespattered,
 My Banjo is crushed on the ground !

I dare not complain, notwithstanding—
 I'm faint with the fumes of whitelead ;
And trip over pails on the landing,
 And paint-pots fall down on my head !
When right through my hall I go stumbling—
 I'm sick, and I'm sorry, and sore ;
O'er planks and o'er ladders I'm tumbling,
 And get my great-coat painted o'er.
To myself I can scarcely help mumbling—
 Spring Cleaning's a terrible bore !

TAKEN IN TOW.

*How blithely the beauties break into a canter,
And over the sward how their feet pit-a-pat !
The limber young lass in a white Tam o' Shanter,
The pouting young puss in a sailor-boy hat !*

O, PANGBOURNE is pleasant in sweet Summer-time,
And Streatley and Goring are worthy of rhyme :
The sunshine is hot and the breezes are still,
The River runs swift under Basildon Hill !
To lounge in a skiff is delightful to me,
I'm feeling as lazy as lazy can be ;
I don't care to sail and I don't care to row—
Since I'm lucky enough to be taken in tow !

Though battered am I, like the old *Temeraire*,
My tow-ers are young and my tow-ers are fair :
The one is Eleven, the other Nineteen,
The merriest maidens that ever were seen.
They pull with a will and they keep the line tight,
Dimpled Dolly in blue and sweet Hetty in white ;
And though you may think it is not *comme il faut*,
'Tis awfully nice to be taken in tow.

I loll on the cushions, I smoke and I dream,
And list to the musical song of the stream ;
The boat gurgles on by the rushes and weeds,
And, crushing the lilies, scoops over the reeds.
The sky is so blue and the water so clear,
I'm almost too idle to think or to steer !
Let scullers delight in hot toiling, but O !—
Let *me* have the chance to be taken in tow !

The dragon-fly hums and the skiff glides along,
The leaves whisper low and the stream runneth strong :
But still the two maidens tramp girlfully on,
I'll reward them for this when we get to the "Swan ;"
For then shall be rest for my excellent team,
A strawberry banquet, with plenty of cream !—
Believe me, good people, for *I* ought to know,
'Tis capital fun to be taken in tow !

TIROWN!

*If letters ne'er were written,
Or never were received !
If postmen were confounded,
And postage stamps impounded,
Throughout the whole of Britain,
What peace would be achieved !
If letters ne'er were written,
Or never were received !*

TIS the dullest of days,
And my heart it is sad,
So I make the logs blaze,
For the weather is bad ;
I have half done the *Times*,
And have quite done my toast ;
While I'm reading of crimes
Comes the Ten O'clock post.
There's a merry rat-tat,
And a letter from You ;
'Tis so temptingly fat,
That I quickly undo
All its seals in a trice,
And the blossoms release—
It is awfully nice
To have flowers from Nice !

What a dainty perfume
Do your messengers bring,
And they scare away gloom
With their savour of Spring ;
There's the violet blue,
The pale lily, the rose—
But a letter from You
They all fail to disclose !
It puzzles me quite,
And I fail to divine
Why you did not just write
Just one brief little line ?
While the ponds are all ice,
And East winds never cease—
It is awfully nice
To have flowers from Nice !

Ah ! your cheek all a-flush
Most undoubtedly shows
Both the pallor and blush
Of the lily and rose ;
And your eyes are as blue
As the sweet violet ;
They are trustful and true,
And you never forget—

Ah ! I now understand ;
Here's your portrait complete,
In a floral short hand
Is your *carte de visite* !
A most dainty device
Is this charming caprice—
It is awfully nice
To have flowers from Nice !

Stop a moment, for I—
The most luckless of bards—
Neath *fleur d'orange* spy
Two absurd little cards !
Had I only been wise,
And have finished my *Times*,
'Twould have opened my eyes,
And have spared you my rhymes !
One can't always depend
On the word of a Rose.
My poem's at an end,
And my life's full of prose !
Here's a handful of rice
For a couple of geese—
Is it awfully nice
To have flowers from Nice ?

BAGGAGE ON THE BRAIN.

A LUGGAGERIAL LYRIC.

Sung by a Victim at a Foreign Custom House.

O, WOULD you know the perplexity of travelling
With ladies and their luggage on a railway train?
Stay while my lay I am rapidly unravelling,
The sad effects of Baggage on the human Brain !
Powerful portmanteaux here, all brazen-bound and
leathery,
Porters hate, for in their weight they're anything but
feathery ;
Bursting bags, so very full, you'll never get to snap at all,
Fat and frequent boxes quite impossible to strap at all.

Stay—what display, both of quantity and quality,
These rummaging *douaniers* oft bring to light ;
Ev'ry description of feminine frivolity,—
They rumple it and crumple it in fiendish spite !

Coloured bows and silken hose, with snowiest of petticoats,
Little loves of tiny gloves, and bugle-broidered jetty coats,
Morning caps and evening wraps, with handkerchiefs and quillery,
Dinner dresses, golden tresses, ribbon, lace, and frillery !

Here you may peer at a galaxy of tiny boots,
Of every kind of cobblery, exposed to view ;
Shoes you may choose, and infinity of shiny boots,
And coverings for little feet in bronze and blue ;
Bonny little Balmorals, to shoe a fair pedestrian,
Some with furs, and some with spurs, for exercise equestrian ;
Slipperettes, with smart rosettes and ornament bombastical,
Snowy kid to lightly trip upon the toe fantastical !

There you may stare, at her brushes backed in ivory,
In dressing-bag—all monogram and silver top,
Combery, and scissory, and tweezery, and knivery,
Enough to stock the window of a cutler's shop !

*Ess. Bouquet, and Eau des Fées, and Jockey Club, in
handy flask,
Powder-puff, and rouge enough; a silver baby brandy-
flask;
Besides a thousand articles a lady's sure to bring about,
I haven't time to put in rhyme, nor leisure now to sing
about!*

HAYTIME.

BRIGHT is the sunshine, the breeze is quiescent—
Leaves whisper low in the Upper Thames reaches—
Blue is the sky, and the shade mighty pleasant,

Under the beeches :

Midsummer night is, they say, made for dreaming ;

Better by far are the visions of daytime—
Pink and white frocks in the meadow are gleaming—

Helping in Haytime !

Sunshine, I'm told, is productive of freckles—

Sweet are the zephyrs, hay-scented and soothful—
Work is, of all things, so says Mr. Eccles,

Good for the youthful !

Here let me lounge, 'neath the beeches umbrageous ;

Here let me smoke, let me slumber, or slay time,
Gazing with pleasure on toilers courageous—

Working in Haytime !

Fair little *faneuses* in pretty pink dresses,

Merry young maidens in saucy sun-bonnets,
Dainty young damsels with hay in their tresses—

Worthy of sonnets !

Lazy the cattle are, red are the rowers,
Making a toil of the sweet summer playtime ;
Hot are the hay-makers, weary the towers,
Thirsty in Haytime !

Under the beech, round a flower-decked table,
Pouring the cream out and crushing the berry,
Georgie and Gracie and Milly and Mabel
Gladly make merry !
Laughing young labourers, doubtless judicious,
Come for reward when they fancy it's paytime ;
Splendid the cake is, the tea is delicious—
Grateful in Haytime !

PET'S PUNISHMENT.

O, IF my love offended me,
And we had words together,
To show her I would master be,
I'd whip her with a feather !

If then she, like a naughty girl,
Would tyranny declare it,
I'd give my pet a cross of pearl,
And make her always bear it.

If still she tried to sulk and sigh,
And threw away my posies,
I'd catch my darling on the sly,
And smother her with roses !

But should she clench her dimpled fists,
Or contradict her betters,
I'd manacle her tiny wrists
With dainty golden fetters.

And if she dared her lips to pout—
Like many pert young misses—
I'd wind my arm her waist about,
And punish her—with kisses !

THE BABY IN THE TRAIN.

*Let babies travel—leave me lonely—
In carriages “For Babies Only”!*

HOW merrily, how cheerily we ride along the rail !
We think not of the driving rain, nor care about
the gale !

I'm comfortably seated in a snug back corner seat,
With woolly rugs about my knees, and warmers at my
feet :

I've all the morning papers in a heap upon my lap,
I read and calmly contemplate, and think about a nap ;
A nap indeed ? Impossible ! You'll find it all in vain,
To have the slightest slumber with the Baby in the Train !

His rule is autocratic, and his language it is terse,
He freely fists his dear Mama, and domineers o'er Nurse !
He wrinkles up his forehead like an ancient chimpanzee's,
And babbles of the “puff-puff,” and prattles of “gee-
gees : ”

He guggles and he struggles, and he will not stand nor sit,

But he gives an imitation of an apoplectic fit.

I am not very captious, and I wish not to complain—

But *what a* crying grievance is the Baby in the Train !

I wish to feign the friendly, but most shrewdly I reflect—

In silly finger-snapping I must lose my self-respect :

Can I crow or can I chuckle with a countenance serene?

Is “kitchee-kitchee” fitted for my gravity of mien?

Can I talk of “doggie-oggies,” or prate of “ittle dears”?

Is “peep-bo” fit amusement for a person of my years?

And though I do my very best to try to entertain,

I’m thought a vile impostor by the Baby in the Train !

He knows that I am longing to make faces on the sly,

How spitefully I’d pinch him if no guardians were nigh !

He clutches at my watch-chain, he smiles upon my suit,

He tries to eat my eye-glass, he jumps upon my boot ;

He takes away my walking-stick, he crumples up my
Punch ;

He burrows deep in paper-bags in foraging for lunch ;

And cups of milk, at stations oft, how eagerly he’ll drain,
With sighs of satisfaction, will this Baby in the Train !

O bold Directors, build a car to take such household pets !
And fit it up with cots and cribs and rocking basinettes,
And lullabies and picture-books and bon-bons, cakes, and
toys,

To soothe the savage bosoms of these little girls and boys.
Brim high the cup with caudle then ! Let Soothing
Syrup flow !

Let roasted mutton deck the board, and milky rice also !
And let all Railway Companies immediately maintain
A separate compartment for the Baby in the Train !

MISS SAILOR-BOY.

*I pause and watch the boats pass by,
And paint her portrait on the sly !*

HER age is twelve ; half bold, half coy—
Her friends all call her “Sailor-Boy”—
With sweet brown eyes beyond compare,
And close-cropped, curling, sunny hair ;
Her smart straw hat you’ll notice, and
See “Jennie” broidered on the band,
Her sailor’s knot, and lanyard too,
With jersey trim of navy blue ;
Her short serge frock distinctly shows
Well shapen legs in sable hose
And symphonies in needlework,
Where dimpled pearly shadows lurk—
Which, as she swings her skirts, you note
Peep out beneath her petticoat.
This sunburnt baby dives and floats,
She manages canoes or boats ;
Can steer and scull, can reef or row,
Or punt or paddle, fish or tow.
The lithest lass you e’er could see
In all Short-petticoaterie !

MAPLEDURHAM LOCK, *August.*

A PRIVATE NOTE.

PICKED UP ON THE TENNIS LAWN.

I NEVER can tell you, my dear little Loo—

And useless to help me I'm certain my pen is—
Concerning my dress of forget-me-not blue,
I'm taking to Dingle to play at lawn-tennis.

The buttons are silver, of quaint filigree,

The cuffs and the collar quite artfully quilted ;
The pouch the most perfect you ever could see,
The skirt is of flannel most cunningly kilted !

The latter is short, and it serves to disclose—

Entre nous I am told that my ankles are killing—
A glimpse of the clocks on cerulean hose,
The slightest suspicion of Honiton frilling !

My hat is cream-white, with a kingfisher's wing—

A dainty device of my special designing—
My smart ulsterette, c'en a poet might sing,
'Tis white corduroy, with a rose-coloured lining !

The daintiest dress I 'Twould exactly suit you—
I think you'll allow it is awfully jolly—
Come over and see it I Till then, my dear **Loo**,
Believe me to be, yours devotedly, Dolly !

L'INCONNUE.

EAR, far from the town,
I spied drifting down,
Cheeks ruddy and brown—
Eyes so blue—
A sweet sailor-girl,
With hair all a-curl—
In canoe.

She dreams in her boat,
And sweet is the note
That white little throat
Carols through :
She languidly glides,
And skilfully guides—
Her canoe.

'Neath tremulous trees,
She loiters at ease,
And I, if you please,
Wonder who
May be the sweet maid,
Who moons in the shade—
Inconnue.

Pray tell me who can,
Is she Alice or Anne?
Is she Florrie or Fan?
 Is she Loo?

The laziest pet,
You ever saw yet—
 In canoe.

The river's like glass—
As slowly I pass,
This sweet little lass,
 Raises two
Forget-me-not eyes,
In laughing surprise—
 From canoe.

And as I float by,
Said I, "Miss, O why?
O why may not I
 Drift with you?"
Said she, with a start,
"I've no room in my heart—
 Or canoe!"

FALLACIES OF THE FOG.

*A London Fog when it arises
All London soon demoralizes!*

BELIEVE me, I'd shatter the indolent fetters
That long have enchain'd me and held me too fast;
I'd earnestly try to reply to my letters,
That should have been answered the week before last;
I'd get up betimes, and I ne'er would be surly,
Nor slumber till twelve like an underbred hog;
I wouldn't play pool, and I'd go to bed early—
But can't on account of the Fog !

My mind I'd improve—I would e'en give up smoking—
Grow earnest and useful in all sorts of ways—
I'd soon become staid, never laughing or joking,
Preferring statistics to novels or plays !
No more at the weather would I be a railer;
No longer our climate I'd ceaselessly slog.
I'd settle at once with my hatter and tailor—
But can't on account of the Fog !

I'd go and take part in the dullest of dinners,
The prosiest praters I ne'er try to snub ;
And Borewell would find me the best of all grinners
At all the old stories he tells at the Club.
At slow Kettledrums I would often be present,
And talk like a fool or a prim pedagogue ;
To rudest relations I'd sometimes be pleasant—
But can't on account of the Fog !

I'd pay all those calls I so long have neglected,
And highest opinions deservedly earn ;
And do proper things such as none e'er expected—
That borrowed umbrella at once I'd return.
I'd browse in a pasture of virtuous clover,
I cannot detail all the long catalogue
Of countless new leaves I would gladly turn over—
But can't on account of the Fog !

THE MERRY YOUNG WATER-GIRL.

A NEW SONG TO AN OLD AIR.

I WAITED last Monday at Medmenham Ferry,
well—

Anxious for some one to ferry me o'er :
The man was at dinner, and I could tell very well

He would not return for an hour or more.
So I sat me down and smoked so steadily.
What should I do ? I could not tell readily.
A maiden rowed by who had soft sunny hair,
Whose dimples and eyes were beyond all compare—
This Water-Girl was so uncommonly fair !

But only to think, as I pondered there wearily,
And gazed at the Abbey, and thought it a bore,
She leant on her sculls, and she offered most cheerily
To row me across to the opposite shore !
I said, “ How kind ! ” She pouted capriciously !
I stepped aboard, and she smiled deliciously !
And rowed off at once with so charming an air,
And feathered her sculls with such neatness and care—
This Water-Girl was so delightfully fair !

For once I'm in luck—there is not the least doubt of it !

Alas that the voyage is concluded so soon !

The skiff's by the shore, and I slowly get out of it,

And wish the fair damsel " a good afternoon."

I raise my hat, and she looks so thrillingly !

I thank her much, and depart unwillingly !

She smiles, and she ripples her soft sunny hair ;

And leaves a heart broken beyond all repair !—

This Water-Girl was so surpassingly fair !

A SECULAR SERMON.

*As I sit on the shore and gaze at the sea
Where children are wading with infinite glee,
Comes Mama unto Molly—a mischievous imp—
Whose tiny pink toes were coercing a shrimp :
"O Molly, how thoughtless ! My darling," said she,
"Be kind to dumb creatures where'er you may be !"
Then I think, as I gaze on the laughing young elf,
From this text, what a sermon I'll preach to myself !*

SPEAK gently to the herring, and kindly to the calf,
Be blithesome with the bunny, at barnacles don't
laugh !

Give nuts unto the monkey, and buns unto the bear,
Ne'er hint at currant jelly if you chance to see a hare !
O, little girls, pray hide your combs, when tortoises draw
nigh,
And never in the hearing of a pigeon whisper Pie !
But give the stranded jelly-fish a shove into the sea—
Be always kind to animals wherever you may be !

Be lenient with lobsters, and ne'er be cross with crabs,
And be not disrespectful to cuttle-fish or dabs ;
Chase not the cochin-china, chaff not the ox obese,
And babble not of feather-beds in company with geese !

O, never gape at dormice, with crickets ne'er be bold,
Don't overtax the mussel, or let your eels be sold :
When talking to a turtle don't mention calipee—
Be always kind to animals wherever you may be !

O, make not game of sparrows, nor faces at the ram,
And ne'er allude to mint sauce when calling on a lamb !
Don't beard the thoughtful oyster, don't dare the cod to
crimp,
Don't cheat the pike or ever try to pot the playful
shrimp.

Tread lightly on the turning worm, don't bruise the
butterfly,
Don't ridicule the wry-neck, nor sneer at salmon-fry ;
O, ne'er delight to make dogs fight, nor bantams dis-
agree—

Be always kind to animals wherever you may be !

Be patient with black-beetles, be courteous to cats,
And be not harsh with haddock, nor rigorous with rats ;
Don't speak of "blind-man's holiday," if e'er you meet a
mole ;

And if you have a frying-pan, don't show it to a sole !
O, chirrup with the grasshopper, be merry with the grig,
But never quote from Bacon in the presence of a pig !
Don't hurry up the slothful snail, let flies drop in to tea—
Be always kind to animals wherever you may be !

ON THE FRENCH COAST.

TALK about lazy time !—
Come to this sunny clime—
Life is a flowing rhyme—
Pleasant its cadence !
Zephyrs are blowing free
Over the summer sea,
Sprinkling deliciously
Merry Mermaidens !

Despite the torrid heat,
Toilettes are quite complete ;
White are the little feet,
Fair are the tresses :
Maidens here swim or sink,
Clad in blue serge—I think
Some are in mauve or pink—
Gay are the dresses !

If you know Etretât,
You will know *M'sieu là*—
O, such a strong papa!—
 Ever out boating.
You'll know his babies too,
Toto and Lolalou,
All the long morning through
 Diving and floating.

Look at that merry crew!
Fresh from the water blue,
Rosy and laughing too—
 Daring and dripping!
Notice each merry mite,
Held up a dizzy height,
Laughing from sheer delight—
 Fearless of slipping!

He hath a figure grand—
Note, as he takes his stand,
Poised upon either hand,
 Merry young mer-pets:
Drop them! You strong papa,
Swim back to Etretât!
Here comes their dear Mama,
 Seeking for *her* pets!

AT THE "LORD WARDEN."

O, HOW she pouts o'er *Bradshaw's Guide*,
This dainty little two weeks' bride !
Pray has she found, on reaching Dover,
Her lot no longer cast in clover ?
Do honeymooning moments drag,
Or has she lost her dressing bag ?

Or does she grieve for kith and kin ?
Or has she lost her *Bound to Win* ?
Or does she find her golden fetter
Now binds her more to worse than better ?
Or has she lost her left-hand glove ?
Or does she mourn a bygone love ?

Perhaps she wants a cup of tea,
Or very much dislikes the sea ;
And views with greatest dread and sorrow
The crossing over on the morrow !
Or thinks it much too long to wait
For dinner until half-past eight !

Perhaps she cannot find her keys,
Perhaps she's difficult to please :—
 I know not which, but it is fearful
 To see those pretty eyes so tearful !
Her face—it cannot be denied—
Too sad is for a two weeks' bride !

DOVER, *September.*

BOLNEY FERRY.

THE way was long, the sun was high,
The Minstrel was fatigued and dry !
From Wargrave he came walking down,
In hope to soon reach Henley town ;
And at the "Lion" find repast,
To slake his thirst and break his fast.
Alas ! there's neither punt or wherry
To take him over Bolney Ferry !

He gazes to the left and right—
No craft is anywhere in sight,
Except the horse-boat he espied
Secure upon the other side ;
No skiff he finds to stem the swirl,
No ferryman, nor boy, nor girl !

He sits and sings there "Hey down derry !"
But can't get over Bolney Ferry !

No ferry-girl ? Indeed I'm wrong,
For she—the subject of my song—
So dainty, dimpled, young, and fair,
Is coolly sketching over there.

She gazes, stops, then seems to guess
The reason of the Bard's distress.

A brindled bull-dog she calls "Jerry,"
Comes with her over Bolney Ferry !

She pulls, and then she pulls again,
With shapely hands, the rusty chain ;
She smiles, and, with a softened frown,
She bids her faithful dog lie down.
As she approaches near the shore
She shows her dimples more and more.

Her short white teeth, lips like a cherry
Unpouting show, at Bolney Ferry !

With joy he steps aboard the boat,
The Rhymer's rescued and afloat !
She chirps and chatters, and the twain
Together pull the rusty chain :
He sighs to think each quaint clink-clank
But brings him nearer to the bank !

His heart is sad, her laugh is merry,
And so they part at Bolney Ferry !

The Minstrel sitting down to dine
To retrospection doth incline ;
"A faultless figure, watchet eyes
As sweet as early summer skies !

What pretty hands, what subtle grace,
And what a winsome little face ! ”

In Mrs. Williams' driest sherry
He toasts the Lass of Bolney Ferry !

DOT.

O, HAD I but a fairy yacht,
I know quite well what I would do—
I soon would sail away with Dot !

I'd quickly weave a cunning plot,
Had I but fairies for my crew—
O, had I but a fairy yacht !

I'd soon be off just like a shot,
Far, far across the ocean blue ;
I soon would sail away with Dot !

What happiness would be my lot,
With nought to do all day but woo—
O, had I but a fairy yacht !

To some sweet unfrequented spot—
If I but thought that hearts were true—
I soon would sail away with Dot !

I'd sail away, not minding what,
My friends approve, or foes pooh-pooh—
O, had I but a fairy yacht !

For name or fame care not a jot,
I'd leave behind no trace or clue—
I soon would sail away with Dot !

Forgetting all, by all forgot,
I'd live and love the whole day through—
O, had I but a fairy yacht !

In distant lands I'd build a cot,
And live alone with I know who—
I soon would sail away with Dot !

I'd start at once—O, would I not ?
If I were only twenty-two—
O, had I but a fairy yacht,
I soon would sail away with Dot !

COWES, *August*.

A RIVERSIDE LUNCHEON.

OUR Crew it is stalwart, our Crew it is smart,
But needeth refreshment at noon ;
Let's land at the lawn of the cheery "White Hart,"
Now gay with the glamour of June !
For here can we lunch to the music of trees—
In sight of the swift river running—
Off cuts of cold beef and a prime Cheddar cheese,
And a tankard of bitter at Sonning !

The garden is lovely, the host is polite,
His rose-trees are ruddy with bloom,
The snowy-clad table with tankards bedight,
And pleasant that quaint little room ;
So sit down at once, at your inn take your ease—
No man of our Crew will be shunning—
A cut of cold beef and a prime Cheddar cheese,
And a tankard of bitter at Sonning !

We've had a long pull, and our hunger is keen,
We've all a superb appetite !
The lettuce is crisp, and the cresses are green,
The ale it is beady and bright ;

New potatoes galore, and delicious green peas—
The Skipper avers they are “stunning”—
With cuts of cold beef and a prime Cheddar cheese,
And a tankard of bitter at Sonning !

The windows are open, the lime-scented breeze
Comes mixed with the perfume of hay ;
We list to the weir and the humming of bees
As we sit and we smoke in the bay !
Then here's to our host, ever anxious to please,
And here's to his brewers so cunning !
The cuts of cold beef and the prime Cheddar cheese,
And the tankards of bitter at Sonning !

LOVE-LOCKS.

IN Arcady's fair groves there dwells
A Wizard, and 'tis there he sells
All sorts of cunning beauty spells,
From snow-white skins to blushes :
For pretty girls are scented toys ;
Young men can buy *pomade Hongroise* ;
There's hair-dye for the gay old boys,
And ivory-backed brushes.

There beauty's tresses are unsurled,
There blonde moustachios are twirled,
And darlings who have curls are curled,
While those who've none buy plenty :
The Wizard keeps the key, 'tis true,
To turn grey locks to raven hue,
And makes bald coots of sixty-two
Become smart youths of twenty.

My hair is getting thin, and so
To Arcady I sometimes go
In search of "balm," for you must know

I hold "*Dum spiro, spero:*"

Though washes of all sorts I've tried,
And countless ointments have applied,
Old Time has made my parting wide,
And sunk my hopes to zero.

The other day it came to pass,
I sat me down before the glass,
And saw reflected there, alas !

A face grown old and jaded :
That face was scored by lines of care,
The forehead was quite high and bare ;
For, strange to say, the thick brown hair
Of other days had faded !

Ah, how that face has changed since times
Long passed away, when at "The Limes"
My laughter rang with midnight chimes—

My song was gay and early !
Then hearts were hearts, and blue were skies,
And tender were sweet Lucy's eyes—
When I believed in woman's sighs,
My locks were thick and curly !

As Mr. Wizard snips and snips,
I think of Lucy's laughing lips,
And whilst he just takes off the tips,
 I muse on bygone pleasures :
At home I have a tiny tress
Of soft brown hair ; I must confess,
Although it caused me much distress,
 'Tis treasured 'mid my treasures.

Ah, would that night come back again
When she took from her *châtelaine*
Her scissors !—it was not in vain.

I hear her laugh the while her
Fingers, dimpled soft and fair,
Thrill as she clips one lock of hair ;
While I, like Samson, sit still there,
 And smile on sweet Delilah.

When blonde and brown locks interlace,
Or scented tresses sweep your face,
While laughter unto sighs give place,
 And pouting lips are present ;
Or meek grey eyes droop still more meek,
And dimples play at hide-and-seek,
There's but one language lips can speak—
 'Tis brief, but rather pleasant !

In place of Lucy's hand I feel
The chilly touch of Wizard's steel,
Who brings me back from the ideal,
 By talk of lime-juice water ;
And beauty's fingers no more hold
My locks—they're by the barber sold
To stuff arm-chairs ; sometimes, I'm told,
 They're used to mix with mortar !

And Lucy ? She's at Bangalore,
And married to old Colonel Bore ;
They say she flirts from ten to four—
 Indeed, I do not doubt them.
'Tis hard to steer among the rocks
Of life without some awkward knocks ;
They say that " Love laughs loud at locks " —
 He howls at those without them !

A STREATLEY SONATA.

YES ! Here I am ! I've drifted down—
The sun is hot, my face is brown—
Before the wind from Moulsford town,
So pleasantly and fleetly !
I know not what the time may be—
It must be half-past Two or Three—
And so I think I'll land and see,
Beside the " Swan " at Streatley !

And when you're here, I'm told that you
Should mount the Hill and see the view ;
And gaze and wonder, if you'd do
Its merits most completely :
The air is clear, the day is fine,
The prospect is, I know, divine—
But most distinctly I decline
To climb the Hill at Streatley !

My Doctor, surely he knows best,
Avers that I'm in need of rest ;
And so I heed his wise behest
 And tarry here discreetly :
'Tis sweet to muse in leafy June,
'Tis doubly sweet this afternoon,
So I'll remain to muse and moon
 Before the " Swan " at Streatley !

But from the Hill, I understand
You gaze across rich pasture-land ;
And fancy you see Oxford and
 P'raps Wallingford and Wheatley :
Upon the winding Thames you gaze,
And, though the view's beyond all praise,
I'd rather much sit here and laze
 Than scale the Hill at Streatley !

I sit and lounge here on the grass,
And watch the river-traffic pass ;
I note a dimpled, fair young lass,
 Who feathers low and neatly :
Her hands are brown, her eyes are grey,
And trim her nautical array—
Alas ! she swiftly sculls away,
 And leaves the " Swan " at Streatley !

She's gone ! Yes, now she's out of sight !
She's gone ! But still the sun is bright,
The sky is blue, the breezes light
With thyme are scented sweetly :
She *may* return ! So here I'll stay,
And, just to pass the time away,
I smoke and weave a lazy lay
About the "Swan" at Streatley !

THE MIDSIIIPMAID.

THE sea is calm, the sky is blue ;
I've nothing in the world to do
But watch the sea-gulls flap and veer,
From 'neath the awning on the Pier ;
And as I muse there in the shade,
I see a merry Midshipmaid.

The sauciest of bonny belles,
In broidered coat with white lappels ;
Her ample tresses one descries
Are closely plaited, pig-tail-wise.
A smart cocked hat, a trim cockade,
Are sported by this Midshipmaid.

I wonder, in a dreamy way,
If e'er she lived in Nelson's day ?
Was she a kind of " William Carr,"
Or did she fight at Trafalgar ?
And could she wield a cutlass-blade,
This laughing little Midshipmaid ?

Was she among the trusty lads—
Before the time of iron-clads—
Those reckless, brave young Hearts of Oak,
Who looked on danger as a joke ?
Or did she ever feel afraid,
This dainty little Midshipmaid ?

She might have fought, indeed she should,
In time of Howe or Collingwood ;
She might have—but I pause and note
She wears a kilted petticoat ;
And 'neath it you may see displayed
Trim ankles of the Midshipmaid !

My dream is past ! This naval swell
Is naught but pretty Cousin Nell !
“ You Lazy Thing,” she says, “ confess
You’re quite enchanted with my dress.
Just take me down the Esplanade !”—
I'm captured by the Midshipmaid !

A PANTILE POEM.

BENEATH the Limes, 'tis passing sweet
To shelter find from noontide heat ;
At Tunbridge Wells, in torrid days,
This leafy shade's beyond all praise—
A picturesque, cool, calm retreat !

I sit upon a penny seat,
And noddle time with languid beat,
The while the band brave music plays
Beneath the Limes !

I watch the tramp of many feet,
And passing friends I limply greet,
Well shielded from the solar rays ;
I sit and weave some lazy lays,
When hours are bright and time is fleet—
Beneath the Limes !

Beneath the Limes, 'tis good, you know,
To lounge here for an hour or so,
And sit and listen if you please
To sweet leaf-lyrics of the trees—
As balmy August breezes blow !

You'll dream of courtly belle and beau,
Who promenaded long ago,
Who flirted, danced, and took their ease—
Beneath the Limes !

No doubt they made a pretty show
In hoop, in sack, and furbelow ;
These slaves to Fashion's stern decrees,
These patched and powdered Pantilese,
With all their grand punctilio—
Beneath the Limes !

Beneath the Limes, perchance you'll fret
For bygone times, and may regret
The manners of the time of Anne,
The graceful conduct of a fan,
And stately old-world etiquette !

The good old days are gone, and yet
You never saw, I'll freely bet,
More beauty since the Wells began—
Beneath the Limes !

For Linda, Bell, and Margaret,
With Nita, Madge, and Violet,
Alicia, Phyllis, Mona, Nan,
And others you'll not fail to scan,
Will make you bygone times forget—
Beneath the Limcs !

HENLEY IN JULY.

O, COME down to Henley, for London is horrid ;
There's no peace or quiet to sunset from dawn.
The Row is a bore, and the Park is too torrid,
So come down and lounge on the " Red Lion " Lawn !
Then, come down to Henley, no time like the present,
The sunshine is bright, the barometer's high—
O, come down at once, for Regatta-time's pleasant,
Thrice pleasant is Henley in laughing July !

Now, gay are the gardens of Fawley and Phyllis,
The Bolney backwaters are shaded from heat ;
The rustle of poplars on Remenham Hill is,
Mid breezes æstival, enchantingly sweet !
When hay-scented meadows with oarsmen are crowded—
Whose bright tinted blazers gay toilettes outvie—
When sunshine is hot and the sky is unclouded,
O, Henley is splendid in lovely July !

Ah me ! what a revel of exquisite colours,
What costumes in pink and in white and in blue,
By smart *canoistes* and by pretty girl-scullers,
Are sported in randan, in skiff, and canoe !

What sun-shaded lasses we see out a-punting,
What fair *gondoliere* perchance we esp'y.
And house-boats and launches all blossom and bunting—
O, Henley's a picture in merry July !

If it rains, as it may, in this climate capricious,
And Beauty is shod in the gruesome galosh ;
While each dainty head-dress and toilette delicious
Is shrouded from view in the grim mackiatosh !
We'll flee to the cheery "Athena" for shelter—
The *plate* is perfect, the Giesler is dry—
And think while we gaze, undismayed, at the "pelter,"
That Henley is joyous in dripping July !

The ancient grey bridge is delightful to moon on,
For ne'er such a spot for the mooner was made ;
He'll spend, to advantage, a whole afternoon on
Its footway, and loll on its quaint balustrade !
For this, of all others, the best is of places
To watch the brown rowers pull pantingly by,
To witness the splendour, the shouting, the races,
At Henley Regatta in charming July !

When athletes are weary and hushed is the riot,
When launches have vanished and house-boats are gone,
When Henley once more is delightfully quiet—
"Tis soothing to muse on the "Red Lion" Lawn !

When the swans hold their own and the sedges scarce
shiver—

As sweet summer breezes most tunefully sigh—
Let us laze at the ruddy-faced Inn by the River,
For Henley is restful in dreamy July !

THE MINSTREL'S RETURN.

A MOORE OR LESS MELODY.

FAREWELL, O farewell to the Holiday Season !
(Thus murmured a Minstrel just back from the sea.)
I'm glad to return unto rhyme and to reason ;
In London once more I'm delighted to be !

Ah ! sweet were the days in the Upper Thames reaches,
How happy the doing of nothing at all !
And sweet, too, the flavour of ripe sunny peaches,
That dropped in our hands from the Rectory wall.

But long shall I cherish, through dreary December,
The thought of that even we drifted away ;
The twilight, the silence, I long shall remember,
The flash of the oar and the perfume of hay.

And still, when "*My Queen*" the street-organ is playing,
Or "*Patience*" is blown by cacophonous bands,
I smile on the *di c o l*, I nod to the braying,
And muse with delight upon Scarborough Sands.

The young laughing maids, with their salt-sprinkled
tresses,
Let artfully down on their shoulders to dry ;
I see, on the Spa, in their pretty pink dresses :
Maud, Winnie, and Connie, and Daisy, and Di.

Nor did Cook and his *coupons* a moment forget me ;
My *passepport* was *visé* the length of my flight ;
While *Murray* and *Bradshaw* did aid and abet me,
And Coutts with the circular notes was all right.

Farewell—when at bedtime I sink on my pillow
I dream of my toil up the snow-covered steep,
While mules, *vetturini*, and boats on the billow,
And polyglot waiters embitter my sleep !

Ah, me ! oft at night how I painfully worry—
And think where on earth I have possibly been ?—
O'er towns, half forgotten, I saw in a hurry,
And ghosts of the “lions” I ought to have seen !

And now, when the Club becomes cheerful and crowded,
And men are returning all hearty and brown ;
When rooms with the vesper tobacco are clouded—
'Tis doubly delightful to get back to town !

Farewell, O farewell, for dear London is pleasant—
No longer I feel inclination to roam—
I think, as I stir up the coals incandescent,
I'm happy indeed to be once more at home !



A SINGER'S SKETCH-BOOK.



DOVER.

ON Dover Pier, brisk blew the wind,
The Fates against me were combined ;
For when I noticed standing there,
Sweet Some-one with the sunny hair—
To start I felt not much inclined.

Too late ! I cannot change my mind,
The paddles move ! I am resigned—
I only know I would I were,
On Dover Pier !

I wonder—will the Fates be kind ?
On my return, and shall I find
That grey-eyed damsel passing fair,
So bonny, blithe, and debonair,
The pretty girl I left behind ?
On Dover Pier !

CHAMOUNI.

A CLIMBING Girl, I met, you know,
Above the Valley in the snow ;
I raised my hat, she deigned to speak,
She pointed out each pass and peak,
And sombre pine-trees down below.

We watched the sunset's ruddy glow,
We watched the lengthened shadows grow,
Her eyes and dimples were unique—
A Climbing Girl !

To Chamouni our pace was slow,
It darker grew, we whispered low ;
Her dimples played at hide-and-seek—
Ah me ! 'twas only Tuesday week
She married Viscount So-and-so—
A Climbing Girl !

BAVENO.

BENEATH the Vines, Hotel Belle Vue,
I'm very certain I know who
Here loves to trifle, I'm afraid,
Or lounge upon the balustrade,
And watch the Lake's oft changing hue.

'Tis sweet to dream the morning through,
While idle fancies we pursue,
To pleasantplash of passing blade—
Beneath the Vines !

I love to laze ; it's very true,
I love the sky's supernal blue ;
To sit and smoke here in the shade,
And slake my thirst with lemonade,
And dream away an hour or two—
Beneath the Vines !

AT TABLE D'HÔTE.

AT *Table d'hôte*, I quite decline
To sit there and attempt to dine !
Of course you never dine, but “feed,”
And gobble up with fearsome greed
A hurried meal you can’t define.

The room is close, and, I opine,
I should not like the food or wine ;
While all the guests are dull indeed
At *Table d'hôte*.

The clatter and the heat combine
One’s appetite to undermine.
When noisy waiters take no heed,
But change the plates at railway speed—
I feel compelled to “draw my line”
At *Table d'hôte* !

AT ETRETÂT.

A DIVING Belle ! Pray who is she ?
For swimming thus armed *cap-à-pie*.
(The sea is like a sea of Brett's.)
A graceful girl in trouserettes,
And tunic reaching to the knee.

Her voice is in the sweetest key,
Her laugh is full of gladsome glee ;
Her eyes are blue as violets—
A Diving Belle !

I wonder what her name can be ?
Her sunny tresses flutter free ;
Now with the ripples she coquets,
First one white foot, then two, she wets.
A splash ! She's vanished in the sea—
A Diving Belle !

HOMESICK.

'**M**ID Autumn Leaves, now thickly shed,
We wander where our paths o'erspread,
With yellow russet, red and sere :
The country's looking dull and drear,
The sky is gloomy overhead.

The equinoctial gales we dread,
The summer's gone, the sunshine's fled ;
We've rambled far enough this year—
'Mid Autumn Leaves !

Though fast our travel-time has sped,
On London's flags we long to tread ;
The latest laugh and chaff to hear,
To find the Club grown doubly dear ;
Its gas burns bright, its fire glows red—
'Mid Autumn Leaves !

SKREELIESPORRAN.

A SONG FOR BAGPIPES.

H AGGIS broo is bla' and braw,
 Kittle kail is a' awa' ;
 Gin a lassie kens fu' weel,
 Ilka pawkie rattlin reel.
 Hey the laddie ! Ho the plaidie !
 Hey the sonsie Finnie haddie !
 Hoot awa' !

Gang awa' wi philibegs,
 Maut's nae missed frae tappit kegs ;
 Sound the spleuchan o' the stanes,
 Post the pibroch i' the lanes !
 Hey the swankie, scrievin' shaver !
 Ho the canny elishmaclaver !
 Hoot awa' !

Parritch glowry i' the ee,
 Mutchkin for a wee drappee ;
 Feckfu' is the barley-bree—
 Unco' gude ! Ah ! wae is me !
 Hey the tousie Tullochgorum !
 Ho the mixtie-maxtie jorum !
 Hoot awa' !

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

TIS merry 'neath the mistletoe,
When holly-berries glisten bright ;
When Christmas fires gleam and glow
When wintry winds so wildly blow,
And all the meadows round are white—
'Tis merry 'neath the mistletoe !

How happy then are Fan and Flo,
With eyes a-sparkle with delight !
When Christmas fires gleam and glow,
When dainty dimples come and go,
And maidens shrink with feignéd fright—
'Tis merry 'neath the mistletoe !

A privilege 'tis then, you know,
To exercise time-honoured rite ;
When Christmas fires gleam and glow
When loving lips may pout, although
With other lips they oft unite—
'Tis merry 'neath the mistletoe !

If Florry then should whisper "No!"
Such whispers should be stifled quite,
When Christmas fires gleam and glow;
If Fanny's coy objecting "O!"
Be strangled by a rare foresight—
'Tis merry 'neath the mistletoe!

When rosy lips, like Cupid's bow,
Assault provokingly invite,
When Christmas fires gleam and glow,
When slowly falls the sullen snow,
And dull is drear December night—
'Tis merry 'neath the mistletoe!

SOUND WITHOUT SENSE.

A POEM FOR RECITATION.

(A Certain Person, staying at Sniggerton-on-Sea, was asked by the Vicar to give a recitation at one of the Penny Readings. But when the evening came he found, as usual, he had been too lazy to learn anything. Nothing daunted, he stepped on the platform, with a profound bow and a defiant air, and said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I am about to attempt a recitation of the celebrated poem, so widely known as 'The Capstan Bar.'" Great applause. Awkward people, regardless of grammar, whisper, "Who by?" Officious people, regardless of truth, say, "Byron, Longfellow, Tennyson, Wendell Holmes, Browning, Bret Harte, &c., &c." Mild people say, "O, yes, of course, how stupid; recollect the piece very well now you mention it." Impatient people say, "S-s-s-sh!" and the C. P., fixing a nervous old Lady in the front row with his eye, thus begins)—

A H! the days are past when we clomb the mast and
sat on the peerless peak,
And laughed aloud at the topping list and jeered at the
garboard streak!

Yet the wayward windlass is blithe and gay, there's brass
in the County Bank,
There is ale to drink as we sit and think, and knots in
the oaken plank :
But the fretful foam of the summer sea, the scent of the
seething tar,
Alas and alack they ever bring back, the fate of the
Capstan Bar !

(“*O, Bravo!*” shout those who pretended they knew the poem. The Vicar nods his head approvingly. “*How sweet!*” says a gushing young Lady of uncertain age who contributes to “*Poet's Corner*” in the “*Sniggeton Sentinel*.¹” The C. P. thinks he has made an impression, and, putting on an air of intense pain, he proceeds.)

O ! we toil and moil and we moil and toil for the scanty
wage we earn,
As the mud may spatter the hansom-cab and freckle the
fitful fern :
But never again in the wreathing rain, a-roll on the
raucous rink,
Do we clasp the hand of the German band and swim in
the sable ink !
While the pallid hencoop may pass away and the juggéd
hare may jar,
With a gruesome groan as he sits alone and stares at the
Capstan Bar !

(*Two old Ladies shed tears, the Poetess tells her friend that she has "quite a lump in her throat," and the Landlord of the "Jocund Jellyfish," thinking the "Bar" is something convivial, vows he will ask the Recitor what he will please to take directly the performance is over. The C. P. changes his tone to one of hearty joviality and proceeds merrily.*)

But our hearts beat high for the Strasbourg pie, for two-pronged forks are keen,
And our knives are sharp as we twang the harp and batter the old tureen !
While the limpets laugh and the winkle wails and the hermit-crab is sore,
And the pensive puffin tries hard to learn the Song of the Stevedore ;
For the gleesome gull flaps his white, white wings and longs for a mild cigar,
As the simple lads smoke Intimidads and sigh for the Capstan Bar !

(*Hearty applause from the umbrella of the principal tobacconist. The Vicar shakes his head, and fears the poem is getting a little too convivial. The C. P. only wishes he knew how it was going to end. But, putting on the expression of a bland Bishop on a bicycle, in a sweet voice, tinged with sorrow, he continues.*)

Ah ! 'tis passing sweet when the day is done, and the
 craven cringles croon,
And the snackfrews start in the village cart, in sight of
 the silver moon ;
When the gloomy gargler has gone to sleep, and the busy
 buzwigs snore,
As the lovers stalk with a catlike walk on the cataleptic
 shore !
And gay Lantern Jack and fair Amberanne are happy
 enough—but har !
There's bold Sparrer Gus with his blunderbuss lies hid by
 the Capstan Bar !

(He gives the last line with such tragic force that he frightens the Old Ladies out of their wits, and makes the Vicar nearly jump out of his chair. The C. P. then delivers the following verse with frenzied energy and marvellous rapidity. He contorts his countenance, he shakes his fist, he stamps, and he shouts.)

A howl and a yowl, as the rivals close, with a frantic
 force they fight ;
A smash and a crash, and the pebbles fly, as they kick
 and scream and bite !
A thump and a bump and a blackened eye, a sprain and
 a broken nose !
A crack and a smack and a fractured leg—a bundle of
 tattered clothes !

But bold Sparrer Gus, when the red sun rose, was nought
but a bruiséd scar,
And gay Lantern Jack he never came back that night
from the Capstan Bar !

(Terrific applause, as every one thinks it is over. Great disappointment of the Audience when the C. P., after bowing low, holds up his hand as a token that he will try their patience a few moments longer. He gives a deep sigh, and in a low plaintive voice recites the remainder.)

Ah ! our tale is told ! But we oft come here and gaze on
the haunted mill,
For the noxious nugget no longer chirps and the captious
carp is still !
When the gaping grampus is all forlorn and the muffineers
are beat,
When the scallywag, with his carpet-bag, refuses to
drink or eat,
When the careful crumpet no longer tries to plunder the
Pullman car,
When the day is past and the tide runs fast—we weep for
the Capstan Bar !

(A whirlwind of applause, during which the C. P. retires, jumps into a cab, just catches the mail train, and is in London before the Vicar and the good people of Sniggerton have quite decided who was the Author of the notable Poem they had heard recited.)

THE MERRY MONTH OF MAY.

A REALISTIC STUDY.

*A Song of May? Who can essay—
When nights are cold and skies are grey,
When clad in winterly attire,
When crooning o'er the ruddy fire—
A merry laughing roundelay?
When raw and rainy is each day,
With nothing Springlike to inspire
This hopeless, dull, catarrhic lyre—
Who can essay a Song of May?*

O, MAY is the month when the madly æsthetical
, Plunge deep into nonsense profoundly poetical!
They sing and they shout about sunshine and greenery,
Of beauty and blossom and song-birds and scenery :
I own that my notion of May is a hazy one,
And don't think its weather is good for the Lazy One ;
To go out of doors I have not the temerity—
Now May has set in with its usual severity !

The weather, distressing for man and for beast it is,
The sky is o'erclouded, the wind in the East it is ;
The streets and the footways detestably muddy are,
Our cheeks are all blue, and our noses all ruddy are :
We've coughs, and we've colds, and we've pains most
rheumatical,
Our temper is short, and our language emphatical !
There's nothing but hopeless, dull, gloomy austerity—
Now May has set in with its usual severity !

The mornings are dark, and the nights demoniacal,
We're dismal, depressed, and we're hypochondriacal !
O, May is a fraud—there's no trace of blue skies
about,
The month that all poets have told lots of lies about !
Let's all stop at home, and in easy-chairs ruminiate,
The curtains draw close and the lamps now illuminate ;
And pile on the logs with most cheerful celerity—
Now May has set in with its usual severity !

TWO AND TWO.

A SONG OF SCHOOL-GIRLS.

COME the little ones in frocks,
With their pretty shoes and socks,
And their tangled sunny locks—

Laughing crew !

Come the dainty dimpled pets,
With their tresses all in nets,
And their peeping pantalettes

Just in view :

Come the gay and graceful girls,
With their fringes and their curls—
Sweetest string of Beauty's pearls,

Two and two !

What delicious laughter trills,
As "rude Boreas" oft wills,
Just to flutter frocks and frills

All askew !

And the "blust'ring railer" shows—
'Neath the curt and kilted clothes—
Hints of shapely sable hose
Unto you—
With a glimpse of ankles neat,
And small, deftly booted feet,
All a-patter down the street—
Two and two :

Here the coming flirt appears,
With the belle of after-years,
And the beauty even peers
May pursue :
Each Liliputian fair
Gallant Guardsmen may ensnare,
Or enthrall a millionaire,
And subdue !
Who would think such mischief lies
In the future of their sighs,
Or such pretty childlike eyes—
Two and two ?

There are eyes of peerless brown,
That in time may take the town ;
There are others drooping down—
Black or blue—

Whose bright flashes you may find
Will bedazzle—nay, may blind—
E'en the wisest of mankind,

False and true.

There are lips we cannot miss,
Sweet foreshadowings of bliss—
Which, in truth, seem made to kiss,

Two and two !

On the Book of Beauty's page
Fairer girls of ev'ry age,
Skilful artist, I'll engage,

Never drew.

As they prattle, laugh, and play,
It is sad to think some day,
That Old Time their spirits gay,

May subdue !

That young maidens, slim and shy,
May grow old and stout and sly—
Makes one grieve as they pass by

Two and two !

A SHORTHAND SONNET.**WRITTEN ON THE FAN OF A FLIRT.**

THEY are blue,
As the skies—
Those sweet eyes,
Made to woo !
But can you
E'er surmise—
Are her sighs,
False or true ?

To beguile,
And to hurt
With a smile
And desert ;
Is the wile,
Of a Flirt !

IN A GONDOLA.

WEARY of show and sight, with pictures bored,
Sick of *palazzi* and of churches tired ;
Here let me rest, and for awhile forget
The "lions" of the City of the Sea !

My friend to see some masterpiece has gone,
When he returns he will of Titian talk,
Of Veronese will he babble on,
Gush o'er Bassano, rave o'er Tintoret !
While he's away I'll rest and muse in peace,
Beneath the *falsa* will I laze and smoke,
And through the sable doorway gaze upon
The brightly tinted sunny water-street !
So quaint, so full of harmony it seems—
Like some rare picture in an ebon frame !

The foreground shows our trusty gondolier,
White-clad, brown-skinned, recumbent, fast asleep !
Above—the gondola's bright, sheeny prow
That flashes, gleams, and glisters in the sun ;
On either side are mouldy, tide-washed walls,
Cracked, blistered, weed-covered, decayed, and damp
Reflecting oft the passing polished prow,
Re-echoing the cry of gondolier !
Here ruddy rust and verdant fungoid growth
Meet in the shattered stone and fissured brick—

Evolving thence rare harmonies in red,
In brown, in yellow, and in green and grey.

A flight of battered, bankrupt marble steps
Of mildewed aspect, fractured, seamed, and scarred—
Worn by the lapping of the countless tides,
Made hollow by the tread of centuries—
Lead to a sculptured archway, where the door,
Massive and iron-bound, now stands ajar,
While footsteps echo through the sombre hall,
To clink of keys and voices partly hushed !

See melancholy windows closely barred
By tangled iron-work of choice design ;
And groups of quaintly headed mooring-posts,
Reflected quaintly in the green canal :
Beyond are rare effects of light and shade—
Strange fitful freaks of colour, hot and cold ;
A picturesque low bridge, with life replete,
As figures, gaily dight, pass to and fro.
A mass of cool grey shadow—rising thence,
Behold the fabric of some grand old church,
With blue-faced clock, whose blurred gold figures show
The hour of our luncheon draweth nigh ;
Beyond a glint of silver light shows where
The Canalazzo sparkles in the sun ;
And, over all, a deep blue sky 'gainst which
Are towers, roofs, and chimneys well-defined !

But list ! In yon balcōny do I hear
The voice of maid, the twang of mandoline !
There, where the sea-green shutters are thrown back,
There, where bright blossoms flout the rugged stone,
From 'neath the awning, gay and saffron-stiped,
Comes rippling a Venetian *barcarolle* !
The dreamy song, the tinkling mandoline,
The mild narcotic of the cigarette,
The lulling motion of my lazy craft,
The pleasant, peaceful, splash of passing oar—
All help to form a soothing lullaby,
Which soon transports me to the Land of Dreams !

I dream I am a Doge of mighty fame ;
And I, in gorgeous raiment fitly clad,
Aboard the *Bucentoro* take mine ease,
And issue mandates none dare disobey !
All tourists are accounted criminal,
And sight-seeing a capital offence ;
To the Piombi, bores I quickly send,
My foes unto the Pozzi I consign !
And on the *Bucentoro* entertain
My friends, like any house-boat on the Thames—
A merry laugh ! My friend returns ! I wake !
My dream is o'er ! Alas ! no longer Doge,
I dread the countless "lions" yet unseen !
Let us to Danieli's go and lunch !

THE LAST LEAF.

A GRAND old Garden by the sea—
I muse beneath the ilex tree,
And musing, see across the bay,
The white sails gleaming far away !
The flash of foam, the sunshine's glint,
The ever-changing tone and tint,
Of purple, grey, and malachite,
And shadows flitting 'fore the light.
While overhead the summer breeze
Plays sweet leaf music in the trees !
And 'neath the cliff, a muffled roar—
The ceaseless sigh of surf on shore !
O tilt of leaves ! O song of sea !
O mingled thrillful harmony !
Now sweet, now sad, it seems to me,
This touching, tender, minor key.
To such rare music would I sing,
The while I in the hammock swing !
Ah ! could the Rhymer but impart
The magic of the Poet's art,
In order that this Leaf might be
A triumph of bright minstrelsy !
O were it not too hot to think,
And if I had but pen and ink ;
Or were it not this afternoon,
And if my Banjo were in tune ;
Or if the weather were not fine,
And could I rouse this Muse of mine ;
Why then . . . But there, I can't pretend—
The Minstrel's lazy to

THE END.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS ON THE FIRST EDITION.

St. James's Gazette.—"One of the lightest and brightest writers of *vers de société*."

Saturday Review.—"Mr. J. Ashby-Sterry is a facile and agreeable versifier, with a genuine gift of expression, a light and dexterous touch, and a grace that is really individual."

The World.—"Sweet and musical. His musical melodies are set in an appropriately dainty shrine."

Daily Telegraph.—" 'The Lazy Minstrel' commends itself both by outward form and inward merit to the lover of choice and dainty literature."

Daily News.—"Mr. Ashby-Sterry is a merry bard. He very seldom brings 'the eternal note of sadness in.' "

Punch.—"The first edition of his 'Lays' went off with a bang that must have astonished His Laziness."

G. A. S. in the *Illustrated London News*.—"Emphatically 'nice' in the nicest—the old-fashioned sense of the word. . . . A delicate little tome. . . . Graceful and, on occasion, tender."

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS (*continued*)—

The Globe.—“The bard not only of the lazy but the leisured. . . . Mr. Ashby-Sterry is a humourist, too, who sees the ludicrous as well as the pleasant side of life, and describes it with much gusto. . . . There is as much variety in his rhythms as there is ingenuity in his rhymes.”

The Queen.—“One of the most facile writers of light and pleasant rhyme.”

Vanity Fair.—“He is the Laureate of the Upper Thames, and no one has so completely seized as he has the sentiment of the lovely river.”

Observer.—“There are few cultivated tastes for which ‘The Lazy Minstrel’ does not provide in his characteristic way.”

Spectator.—“The volume is full of lively and agreeable verse.”

The Bookbuyer (New York).—“Mr. Sterry has the lightness and sureness of touch, without which this kind of verse is of all verse the flattest, stalest, and most unprofitable. He has a keen eye for those significant details which make up a picture, an easy indolence which excludes all appearance of labour, and the self-possession of a man of the world who amuses himself with the making of verse.”

Court Circular.—“He is one of the foremost writers of *vers de société* of the day, and his productions are distinguished by poetic fancy and neat workmanship.”

Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News.—“One of the most welcome of the lighter singers.”

The Theatre.—“There never was such a songster.”

Morning Advertiser.—“He is always in tune with his subject, and knows how to rhyme with facility and expression.”

Court Journal.—“Whether witty or pathetic, the lays and carols are equally well written and entertaining.”

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS (*continued*)—

Academy.—"His measures without being commonplace are simple and easy to follow ; his manner varies from a dainty directness to a playful allusiveness ; his music has what may be described as a 'taking' quality which charms the ear and makes it linger in the memory. His rhymes are generally fresh, and their frequent ingenuity is not too intrusive or elaborate for grace."

Newcastle Chronicle.—"Few writers can impart so much grace to everything he touches, and none have so light and aerial a muse as Mr. Sterry."

North British Daily Mail.—"For fluency of expression, ready command of the fitting epithet at all times, tender grace and gentle humour, Mr. Ashby-Sterry is indeed a marvel ; and the public are under heavy obligations to the man who furnishes such a pleasant feast of mirth-provoking rhymes."

Scotsman.—"At all times his lines are full of effervescent sparkle, fun, and wit."

Liverpool Daily Post.—"The humour of them is the airy, well-bred humour of the man of the world."

Sheffield Weekly Telegraph.—"Quaint and droll, perfect in design and diction, light, bright, and musical, these poems are the most cheerful verses we can meet with in latter-day literature."

Figaro.—"No poet surely has written more glowingly of the delights he enjoyed on the favourite reaches of our lovely River."

Liverpool Mercury.—"A delightful little book, delightful to read and not less delightful to look upon."

Liverpool Courier.—"It is a pleasure to meet with verses so vivacious ; to come in contact with a humorous fancy so fresh and individual."

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS (*continued*)—

Journal des Débats.—“Ce ‘Lazy Minstrel’ est naturel franc, sans prétention ; c'est un aimable compagnon que l'on suit avec plaisir, où son caprice nous conduit et qu'on quitte à regret.”

Publishers' Circular.—“It lightens and brightens one's heart to read Mr. Sterry's charming songs and carols ; their good humour and delicious style, so free from anything like care or worldly taint, seems to be infectious.”

Yorkshire Post.—“Here and there ‘The Lazy Minstrel’ becomes sentimental, but there is always a touch of gay insouciance about his sentiment, and a consistent absence of the mawkishness too often found in the drawing-room ballad.”

Sheffield Independent.—“Quaint, melodious, finished with marvellous care, and full of unexpected oddities of form and expression.”

Liverpool Review.—“He infuses a sunshine and breeziness into his descriptions of scenes and people which make them live before us. His laziness never degenerates into languor, or his sentiment into insipidity.”

Wakefield Free Press.—“The Lazy one is master of his art—he chooses all that is fair, serene, and summer-like for his subjects, and treats them with a soft colour and a musical rhythmic flow that leaves nothing to be desired.”

New York Times.—“The metre is perfect, the music of the verse well sustained, and there is that fun and merry quip in ‘The Lazy Minstrel’ which becomes *vers de société*.”

Boston Post.—“Mr. Ashby-Sterry is an accomplished writer of the lightest and airiest kind of verse. Rhyme and rhythm offer no obstacles to his ease of expression, but are perfect servants, doing gracefully and gaily the varied work that he lays upon them.”

Times of India.—“‘The Lazy Minstrel’ is delightful.”

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